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Drawn from the Life & Sketch'd by E. Miller

Published as the Act directs by G. Ricardi N^o. 46 Fleet Street London 1782.

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T H E
L I F E
O F
SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL.D.
WITH *[Appendix - Biography]*

OCCASIONAL REMARKS ON HIS WRITINGS;
AN AUTHENTIC COPY OF HIS WILL; A
CATALOGUE OF HIS WORKS, AND A FAC
SIMILE OF HIS HAND WRITING.

(The second Edition with considerable Additions and Corrections.)

To which is added,

J O H N S O N I A N A;

O R,

A SELECTION OF DR. JOHNSON'S BON-MOTS,
OBSERVATIONS, &c. MOST OF WHICH WERE
NEVER BEFORE PUBLISHED.

From his cradle

He was a SCHOLAR, and a ripe and good one;
And to add greater honours to his age
Than man could give him, he died, fearing heaven.
Shakespeare.

L O N D O N;

Printed for G. KEARSLEY, No. 46, Fleet-Street.

M,DCC,LXXXV.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THERE are some pieces written and translated by Doctor Johnson, in the early parts of his fame, which I have not particularly mentioned in the following life, not thinking them possessed either of variety, or consequence enough, to mark the progress of his reputation — They are, however, all set down (as far as my information could lead me) in the annexed Catalogue of his Works.

Some critics may perhaps ob-

ject, that in so long and distinguished a life as that of Dr. Johnson, I have not, like Milton's biographers, followed him *from house to house, and lodging to lodging,* or introduced the first copies of his most celebrated works, with all their *original blots and interlineations*—To more curious inquirers I confign this task, my purpose being *only* to give a *sketch, warm from the life*—by which the general character of the man, and of his writings, may be known. How I have succeeded in this, the public are to determine.

The AUTHOR.

Feb. 22, 1785.



Constitutional
and political
and social
and economic
and religious
and educational



1.25 G

Fac-simile of Doctor

Mr Johnson sends u
and begs the favor of seeing

Mr Kearsley in defined w
what he has honored will

ctor Johnson's hand Writing.

compliments to Mr Kingsley,

seeing him as soon as he can.

bring both ^{him} the last edition of
with the name of Beauches.

May 20. 1782

THE
LIFE
OF
SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL.D.

WHEN a man, celebrated for any extraordinary abilities, pays the last great debt to Nature, we become anxious to know his history—sometimes with a view to explore those gradual steps by which he rose to celebrity, and sometimes to mark those infirmities which might diminish general admiration. In either case Biography inculcates this moral purpose—that it *instructs by example*. By the good, we are taught to imitate their virtues—by the bad, to shun their deformities; but when *integrity* and *great abilities* unite in one man, he becomes not only a model for our imitation, but the object of our esteem and reverence.

B

To

To this *last* description I am about to add a conspicuous example, in the life of the late Dr. Samuel Johnson, a man whose writings entitle him to the first rank in the classes of literature—his morals, to the first classes among men.

Samuel Johnson was born in Sept. 1709, in the Parish of St. Mary, Litchfield, Staffordshire, and christened on the 7th of the said month. His father's name was Michael, and by the register of his son's birth is styled *Gentleman*, though it appears from a passage in the Lives of the British Poets, and is further confirmed by the remembrance of many now living, that he was a *Bookseller* in the town of Litchfield.

Of the father there is little known except that his credulity in the virtue of the blood of the Stuarts was so great, that he brought his son Samuel up to London at four years of age, to be stroked for the King's *evil*. This story I had heard before, but did not credit it; upon enquiry, however, I found Dr. Johnson frequently acknowledged it, and added, "he was the last person touched by Queen Anne for that disorder."

He received the first rudiments of his education at the free school of his native town, which at that time flourished * under the direction of Mr. Hunter; and which, amongst

* Bishop Newton's Life, p. 8.

other



other eminent men, produced Bishop Smalridge, Mr. Woolaston, Bishop Newton, Chief Justice Wills, &c. It is generally believed, that his early proficiency in literature induced some persons belonging to the Cathedral to send him to Oxford, and to undertake the expence of finishing his education there.

Certain it is he was admitted of Pembroke College on the 19th of October 1728, under the tuition of Dr. Adams*; and what is very extraordinary, though it is now near fifty-seven years since that period, the Doctor is still living in the same College, and in tolerable good health. Mr. Johnson was then nineteen years of age, and is supposed to have remained there not more than two years, having quitted the University without taking a degree.

Whether an inability to continue the expences of a College life, or a disinclination towards it, occasioned his quitting Oxford so soon, I am not informed; but the former is generally supposed to have been the case†. Whilst there, however, his genius was not

* Nash's History of Worcestershire.

† As a proof of this latter opinion, he has been often seen with his naked feet appearing through the upper-leathers of his shoes; yet once when a new pair was left at his door, he threw them away with indignation, disdaining to accept of any thing so indecently obtruded on his necessity.

unemployed : his College themes and declamations are still remembered ; and to these he added an elegant translation of Pope's Messiah into Latin verse.

That his finances were inconsiderable at this time is further evident, as his first employment after leaving the University, was that of an Usher to the free school at Market Bosworth in Leicestershire, under the direction of the famous Anthony Blackwall; probably at a salary of not more than from twenty to thirty pounds per year. Who that can feel for the depression of genius, but will naturally lament, that a person so admirably fitted to instruct mankind should be confined to so limited a sphere ! Here, however, he had leisure to devote himself to literary pursuits ; and here, it is believed, he laid in those stores of knowledge which afterwards enabled him to inform, to entertain, and improve the world.

On the death of his principal, Mr. Johnson went to Birmingham, and resided in the house of one Warren, where he wrote Essays in a Newspaper, printed by his landlord ; all of which are now irrecoverably lost, from that fugitive mode of publication. It was here also he translated " A Voyage to Abyssinia, by Father Jerome Lobo," and wrote those elegant lines, " On a Lady's presenting a Sprig of Myrtle to a Gentleman," Generally imputed to Mr. Hammond. These verses,

verses, the Doctor very lately declared, were written at the request of a friend, who was desirous of supporting the character of a poet with his mistress.

About the beginning of the year 1735, Mr. Johnson returned to his native town of Litchfield, and undertook the education of some young gentlemen there in the *Belles Lettres*, amongst whom was the late celebrated David Garrick, then about the age of eighteen; and who, by his sprightly talents and conversation, became not only Johnson's pupil, but his companion.

This occupation, however, could not have lasted long; for, in the succeeding year, 1736, we find him advertising to board and instruct young gentlemen in the Latin and Greek languages, at Edial, near Litchfield *; but, whether from the disappointment of so many schemes, or from some other cause, the following year he came up to London, determined to bring his abilities to a scene, where, as they would be sooner and more accurately discovered, they would, of course, be sooner and more liberally rewarded.

* See Gentleman's Magazine, 1736, p. 428—Advertisement. “At Edial, near Litchfield in Staffordshire, young gentlemen are boarded and taught the Latin and Greek languages, by SAMUEL JOHNSON.

Though the circumstance of Mr. Johnson's coming up to London, may be recorded as a singular event in the literary world, it is still rendered more particular by that of his fellow-traveller, who was no less than his pupil, Garrick. Both these remarkable geniuses left Litchfield together, March, 1737, on the following letter of recommendation, from Mr. Walmley, Register of the Ecclesiastical court of Litchfield, to Mr. Colson, a celebrated mathematician :

To the Reverend Mr. COLSON.

Litchfield, March 2, 1737.

" DEAR SIR,

" I had the favour of yours, and am extremely obliged to you; but I cannot say I had a greater affection for you upon it than I had before, being long since so much endeared to you, as well by an early friendship, as by your many excellent and valuable qualifications; and, had I a son of my own, it would be my ambition, instead of sending him to the University, to dispose of him as this young gentleman (meaning Garrick) is. " He, and another neighbour of mine, one Mr. Samuel Johnson, set out this morning for London together. Davy Garrick is to be with you early the next week, and Mr. Johnson to try his fate with a tragedy, and to see to get himself employed in some translation, either

either from the Latin, or the French. Johnson is a very good scholar and poet, and I have great hopes will turn out a fine tragedy-writer. If it should any way lie in your way, doubt not but you would be ready to recommend and assist your countryman.

" G. WALMSLEY."

It appears by this letter, that Mr. Walmsley had a very particular regard for Mr. Johnson ; and, that this regard was mutual, and even not abated by death, appears from Mr. Johnson's grateful remembrance of him in the life of Edmund Smith.

Speaking of his being indebted for some anecdotes of Smith's life to Mr. Walmsley, he breaks out into the following warm effusion of friendship :

" Of Gilbert Walmsley, thus presented to
 " my mind, let me indulge myself in the re-
 " membrance. I knew him very early ; he
 " was one of the first friends that literature
 " procured me, and I hope that, at least, my
 " gratitude made me worthy of his notice.

" He was of an advanced age, and I was
 " only not a boy ; yet he never received my
 " notions with contempt. He was a whig,
 " with all the virulence and malevolence of
 " his party ; yet difference of opinion did
 " not keep us apart. I honoured him, and
 " he endured me.

" He had mingled with the gay world
 " without exemption from its vices or its
 " follies ; but had never neglected the culti-
 " vation of his mind. His belief of reve-
 " lation was unshaken ; his learning pre-
 " served his principles ; he grew first regular,
 " and then pious.

" His studies had been so various, that I
 " am not able to name a man of equal know-
 " ledge. His acquaintance with books was
 " great, and what he did not immediately
 " know, he could at least tell where to find.
 " Such was his amplitude of learning, and
 " such his copiousness of communication,
 " that it may be doubted whether a day now
 " passes, in which I have not some advantage
 " from his friendship.

" At this man's table I enjoyed many
 " cheerful and instructive hours, with com-
 " panions, such as are not often found—
 " with one who has lengthened, and one
 " who has gladdened life ; with Dr. James,
 " whose skill in physic will be long remem-
 " bered ; and with David Garrick, whom I
 " hoped to have gratified with this character
 " of our common friend. But what are the
 " hopes of man ! I am disappointed by that
 " stroke of death, which has eclipsed the
 " gaiety of nations, and impoverished the
 " public stock of harmless pleasure."

What immediate employment Mr. John-
 son obtained as a translator, is unknown ; it
 is,

is, however, most probable, that getting acquainted with the celebrated, but unfortunate Richard Savage, he was by him introduced to Mr. Cave, the proprietor of the Gentleman's Magazine; and what seems to corroborate this, is, that Mr. Johnson has been heard to say, that the first performance that gained him any notice, was the following, published in that miscellany, in the beginning of the year 1738:

Ad URBANUM.

URBANE, nullis fesse laboribus,

URBANE, nullis viete calumniis,

Cui fronte fertum in erudita

Perpetuo viret et virebit;

Quid inoliatur gens imitantium,

Quid et minetur, sollicitus parum,

Vacare solis perge Musis.

Juxta animo studiisq; felix.

Linguæ procacis plumbea spicula,

Fidens, superbo frange silentio;

Victrix per obstantes catervas

Sedulitas animosa tendet.

Intende nervos fortis, inanibus

Risurus olim nisibus æmuli;

Intende jam nervos, habebis

Participes operæ Camœnas.

Non ulla Musis pagina gratior,
 Quam quæ severis Iudicra jungere
 Novit, fatigatamq; nugis
 Utilibus recreare mentem.

Texente Nymphis ferta Lycoride,
 Rosæ ruborem sic Viola adjuvat
 Immista, sic Iris resulget
 Æthereis variata fucis.

S. J.

In May, the same year, he finished that excellent poem called “London,” imitated from the third satire of Juvenal. Will it now be believed, that he offered this poem to most of the booksellers in London, for almost any thing they would give? Some shook their heads at the very word *imitation*, while others, with more civility, looked coolly in his face, and said, “It was not in their way.” At last, the course of rotation brought him to the shop of Mr. Robert Dodsley, brother of the present Mr. James Dodsley, in Pall-Mall. This ingenious and liberal encourager of authors instantly saw its merit; and, though the poem is not above fifteen pages, and that few imitations can boast the merit of originals, he gave him *ten guineas* for the copy: a circumstance which Mr. Johnson used often to speak of amongst his friends; adding jocularly, “Dodsley was the only ‘bookseller in London that found out I had ‘any genius.’”

The

The publication of this poem was fully equal to the bookseller's expectation, as I have been told by a gentleman who had an opportunity of knowing the fact, that the first edition was sold off in a week. The judicious saw a rising genius in the imitator, and Mr. Pope is said to have sought him out, who, receiving no satisfactory answer to repeated enquiries respecting him, said, "It cannot be long before my curiosity will be gratified; the writer of this poem will soon be *déterré*."---His remark was afterwards verified; for, whilst *Juvenal*, and our language shall be had in remembrance, this elegant and spirited imitation of him must be read with delight and improvement.

The price of this poem, though perhaps sufficient on the side of the purchaser, was not adequate to the labour of the author. He therefore, very prudently ceased to risque the reputation he had acquired, by any hasty productions of poetry, and turned his thoughts to *translation*. In this line, he considered he could draw upon his mind with more facility, and reduce his earnings to a greater degree of certainty: But, from the variety of discouraging circumstances, and the wants of Literary friends, Mr. Johnson soon felt himself disgusted with the trade of an author, and the town together; and, in this mood, wished to return again to the country, in order to take upon himself the office of

master of a charity-school in Shropshire, then vacant, the salary of which was about sixty pounds per annum.

What might have accelerated this wish of retirement, at so early a period of his life, was his marriage, which happened much about this time, with Mrs. Porter, of Manchester. This lady had been a widow, and though she was near twenty years older than Mr. Johnson, and had a daughter by her first husband, he behaved to her through the space of many years with great conjugal attachment, and continued his affection to her daughter, (who is now living at Litchfield) with unremitting attention to his death.

But whatever formed the whole of his motives for going down to Shropshire, we find him intent on this project. The Statutes of the school, however, requiring the person so elected, to be a *Master of Arts*, which Mr. Johnson was not; the father of the present Earl Gower, who seems to have been his patron, wrote the following letter in his favour, to a friend of Dean Swift's, then in Dublin :

"SIR,

"Mr. Samuel Johnson (author of *London*, a Satire, and some other poetical pieces) is a native of this county, and much respected by some worthy gentlemen in his neighbourhood, who are trustees of a charity school

school now vacant; the certain salary is sixty pounds a year, of which they are desirous to make him master; but, unfortunately, he is not capable of receiving their bounty, which *would make him happy for life*, by not being a *Master of Arts*; which, by the statutes of this school, the master of it must be.

" Now these gentlemen do me the honour to think that I have interest enough in you, to prevail upon you to write to Dean Swift, to persuade the University of Dublin to send a diploma to me, constituting this poor man Master of Arts in their University. They highly extol the man's learning and probity; and will not be persuaded, that the University will make any difficulty of conferring such a favour upon a stranger, if he is recommended by the Dean. They say he is not afraid of the strictest examination, though he is of so long a journey; and will venture it, if the Dean thinks it necessary; choosing rather to die upon the road, *than be starved to death in translating for booksellers*; which has been his only subsistence for some time past.

" I fear there is more difficulty in this affair, than those good-natured gentlemen apprehend; especially as their election cannot be delayed longer than the 11th of next month. If you see this matter in the same light that it appears to me, I hope you will burn this, and pardon me for giving you so much trou-

ble

ble about an impracticable thing; but, if you think there is a probability of obtaining the favour asked, I am sure your humanity, and propensity to relieve merit in distress, will incline you to serve the poor man, without my adding any more to the trouble I have already given you, than assuring you that I am, with great truth,

“ SIR,

“ Your faithful humble servant,

GOWER.”

Trentham, August 1, 1738.

This application, however, proved unsuccessful, which gave Mr. Johnson great uneasiness. He had set his heart upon being master of this school; as it would have relieved him from the drudgery of authorship, and given him that support which would have bounded his desires. This disappointment, however, like many others which we call by that name, shews the “*vanity of human wishes*,” and on what a slender pivot the affairs of human life turn; for, had Mr. Johnson’s first wish been gratified, he would have missed the opportunities of calling out his great and various abilities; and we should, in all probability, have lost those excellent works which have since enriched the purity of our language, and extended the cause of truth.

Destined therefore, to reside in London, he was forced to engage in any literary em-

employment that could procure him the means of a decent support ; and being known to Edward Cave, his original employer, at his request was induced to write the debates in parliament, which, being at the close of Sir Robert Walpole's administration, much attracted general attention. Mr. Johnson laboured some years in this business ; and, as his mode of performing it must appear somewhat curious, and so very different from that practised at present by the reporters of parliamentary debates, I shall make no apology for inserting it.

The debates, at this time, were rarely given in any of the news-papers, or magazines : and it was to very particular people, and on particular occasions, that the *entrée* of the gallery was allowed. The object, therefore, in a great respect was new ; and the publishing them in the Gentleman's Magazine was a matter of some consequence. Cave, however, being known to several popular members, he got one Worthington, a clergyman of a remarkable good memory, introduced into the gallery ; who, in a little time, availed himself so much of his talents of retention, that he could give, not only the substance, but almost the particular words of the longest speech.

It was Mr. Johnson's province to receive these reports from Worthington, and afterwards to give them that form and impression best

best suited to publication. At first he found himself much perplexed, from the extent of his colleague's memory, who not only picked up the material parts of the debate, but the very *grubs and worms of digression*. He at last made it a rule to receive nothing but the *mere substance*; which he noted down shortly, and then, at his leisure, gave it all those points and graces conformable to the characters of the speakers.

These speeches are to be seen in the Gentleman's Magazine, from about the year 1740, to 1744, under the disguised title of *Speeches of the Senate of Lilliput*; some of which afford such fine specimens of argument and oratory, as probably induced Voltaire to say, (speaking of this period of our history)

“ That the eloquence of the British Senate
“ rivalled those of ancient Greece and
“ Rome.”

It ought however to be mentioned to the credit of Mr. Johnson, that even this very innocent deception, which he was engaged in from *necessity*, afterwards dwelt unpleasingly on his mind, as no longer ago than the Tuesday before he died, he declared to a friend,

“ That those debates were the only parts
“ of his writings which then gave him any
“ compunction; but at that time he had no
“ conception he was imposing on the world,
“ though they were frequently written from
“ very slender materials, and often from
“ none

" none at all—the mere coinage of his own
" imagination." He likewise gave Dr.
Smollet notice of this circumstance when he
was writing his history of England; and
some years since when a gentleman in high
office was praising those speeches before him
for so particular an appropriation of character,
that he could name the speakers without a
signature. "Very likely, Sir," said Johnson,
ashamed of having deceived him; "but I
" wrote them in the garret where I then
" lived."

During the period of giving those debates,
he employed himself in several biographical,
and other productions, which appeared in
the Gentleman's Magazine of those times;
many of which are now to be seen under the
title of, "Miscellaneous and Fugitive Pieces,"
collected and published in three volumes, by
Mr. Thomas Davies. And his Poetry—
now printing, in a small collection, by Mr.
Kearsley, under the title of "*The Poetical
Works of Dr. Samuel Johnson.*

His principal employers in these produc-
tions were Cave and Osborne: the former,
one of his first friends and patrons; the lat-
ter, of "that mercantile rugged race, to
" which the delicacy of the Poet is some-
" times exposed;"* as the following anecdote
will more fully evince.

* Johnson's Life of Dryden.

Mr.

Mr. Johnson being engaged by Osborne, to select a number of the most scarce and valuable tracts in the Earl of Oxford's Library, which he had just purchased in consequence of his Lordship's death, and which were afterwards printed in eight quarto volumes, under the title of the *Harlean Miscellany*: this work went on (agreeable to Osborne's ideas, who measured most things by the facility with which they were done) rather slowly: accordingly he frequently spoke to Mr Johnson of this circumstance; and, being a man of a coarse mind, sometimes by his expressions, made him feel the situation of dependance. Mr. Johnson, however, seemed to take no notice of him, but went on according to that plan which he had prescribed to himself. Osborne, wishing to have the business finished, and perhaps irritated by what he thought an unnecessary delay, one day went into the room where Mr. Johnson was, and abused him in the most illiberal manner: he was an illiterate man, but by great application in his profession, had acquired some property, which had the usual effect, and made him insolent, even to his customers. This impropriety of conduct frequently brought him into scrapes and disgraceful situations.

The selection abovementioned had been at press a considerable time, - and the public
to

to whom it had been often announced; became impatient for its appearance.

Mr. Johnson heard him for some time unmoved; but, at last, losing all patience, he seized up a large folio, which he was at that time consulting, and aiming a blow at the Bookseller's head, succeeded so forcibly, as to send him sprawling to the floor: Osborne alarmed the family with his cries; but Mr. Johnson, clapping his foot on his breast, told him "he need not be in a hurry to rise; for if he did, he would have the further trouble of kicking him down stairs."

The resentments, on both sides, however, were not recorded in marble, as it appears soon after, that Mr. Johnson finished this *selection*, which he recommended to the notice of the world, by a very Critical Introduction, shewing the excellence and value of such a work, as it respected history and biography.

The death of Richard Savage, the unfortunate son of the Earl Rivers, in the year 1743, gave Mr. Johnson a fresh opportunity of shewing his biographical talents in favour of that ingenious but unhappy man. Savage was one of his earliest literary friends when he came to London*, and though, from this connection, it is supposed he has softened

* Dr. Johnson acknowledged, that he and Savage, more than once, rambled all night about the streets, because their joint purses could not raise a sum sufficient to pay for the most humble lodging.

some of the irregularities of his life, it is indisputably one of the most elegant and moral performances in the English language : it, besides shewing us the novelty and vicissitudes of the life of a man of expedience, reminds us, “ that nothing will supply the want of *prudence*; and that negligence and irregularity long continued, will make knowledge useless, wit ridiculous, and genius contemptible :” the fact is, Mr. Johnson was not unacquainted with Savage’s frailties ; but, as he has, not long since, said to a friend on this subject, “ he knew his heart ; and that was never intentionally abandoned : for, though he generally mistook the *love* for the *practice* of virtue, he was at all times a true and sincere believer.”

Savage living very intimately with most of the wits of what is called our Augustan age, gave Mr. Johnson many anecdotes, with which he has since enriched his Biographical Prefaces. The following, however, I believe, has never appeared in print before.

Sir Richard Steele, Phillips, and Savage, spending the night together, at a tavern, in Gerard-street, Soho, they sallied out in the morning—all very much intoxicated with liquor—when they were accosted by a tradesman, going to his work, at the top of Hedge-lane ; who, after begging their pardon for the liberty of addressing them on the subject, told

them
emph

them—"that, at the bottom of the lane, he
" saw two or three suspicious-looking fel-
" lows, who appeared to be bailiffs,—so that,
" if any of them were apprehensive of dan-
" ger, he had better take a different route."

Panic-struck with this intelligence, not one
of them waited to thank the man for his friend-
ship, but flew off different ways, each con-
scious from the embarrassment of his own
affairs, that such a circumstance was very
likely to happen to himself.

The success of *The Life of Savage*, contrib-
uted much to Mr. Johnson's reputation ;
and, as his *moral* always went hand in hand
with his *literary* character, his acquaintance
was sought after with some avidity.

It is not my purpose, nor have I it in my
power, to give the *exact dates* of all his
pieces :—the difficulty of such a scrupulous
attention, Mr. Johnson himself states in the
Life of Dryden. "To adjust" says he,
" the minute events of literary history, is
" tedious and troublesome; it requires, in-
" deed, no great force of understanding, but
" often depends upon enquiries which there
" is no opportunity of making, or is to be
" fetched from books and pamphlets not
" always at hand."

The piece of any consequence which Mr.
Johnson next produced, was his Prologue on
the opening of Drury-lane Theatre, in the
year

year 1747, on the commencement of his friend Garrick's management. This Prologue has been much celebrated, and with great justice, as, independent of the harmony of the versification, I cannot name a more critical history of the English Stage, from the time of Shakespeare, or a more just description of what it ought to be. Such light pieces of poetry, in general, get but a temporary reputation; but this Prologue, though admirably fitted for the occasion, will ever stand a considerable monument of his poetical and dramatic knowledge.

He seems to have written it, partly, as the test of friendship. Garrick and he, as I have before observed, started together, as the children of Fortune. They both, by this time, had been very successful—the former was very nearly at the summit of theatric excellence; and Mr. Johnson had taken equal strides in the Republic of Letters. This appears then, to have been a badge of union between them, and stands as a pleasing memorial of continued friendship between the Poet and the Actor.

Two years afterwards, Garrick had an opportunity of returning him the compliment, with equal warmth of friendship—as, in 1749, Mr. Johnson put his *Irene* into his hands, for performance. This is the Tragedy which Mr. Walmsley alluded to, in his letter (see page six and seven) to the Rev. Mr. Collson,

son, upon his first coming up to London. He had written it at Litchfield; but, as he kept it so far back as from 1737 to 1749, it is presumable he made such revisals and alterations, as a more intimate knowledge of the stage might suggest.

Garrick embraced the interest of this Tragedy, with a cordiality which became the friendship he professed for the Author. The principal characters were divided between himself and the late Mr. Barry, Mrs. Pritchard, and Mrs. Cibber; and the subordinate ones were given to Berry, Havard, Sowdon, and Burton: the dresses were magnificent; the scenes splendid, and such as were well adapted to the inside of a Turkish Seraglio; and the view of the gardens belonging to it, was in all the style of Eastern magnificence.

But notwithstanding this attention, in respect to the Manager and Performers; and that the play was allowed by the best judges to possess fine sentiments and elegant language; and that the moral held up the cause of truth and virtue: yet the incidents and situations were not thought strong enough to produce that kind of effect, which, from habit, an English audience generally expect.

The strangling of *Irene* in the view of the audience was likewise disapproved of by some Critics; and though this incident, after the
first

first representation, was removed to a greater distance, the approbation was not so general as expected. It run its ninth night; and then was laid upon the prompter's shelf, where it has remained to this day.

In the same year, Mr. Johnson produced a Poem, imitated from the 10th Satire of Juvenal, intitled, *The Vanity of Human Wishes*, which was published by his first patron, Mr. Robert Dodsley; and which was received by the public, with all that approbation which so classical and elegant a performance is entitled to.

The success of this Poem ballancing, at least in fame; his disappointment on the stage, it was reasonable to expect Mr. Johnson would have returned to the charge as a dramatic writer; but whether from disgust, or discovering, that this species of writing was not his *forte*, he roused himself to search for fame and immortality upon more successful ground; and who will say he did not succeed in his two subsequent works — his *Dictionary* and the *Rambler*? None, but those who are equally callous to the perceptions of knowledge, and the sympathies of moral virtue.

It not unfrequently happens with great minds, that difficulties and embarrassments call them out with redoubled exertions. Had Mr. Johnson succeeded as a dramatist, he probably would have found it more for his

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use and profit, to have continued to write for the stage : his friend Garrick being manager, might have forwarded his views ; and his name would have, perhaps, at this day, stood in the *médiocre* list of tragedy-writers. But, foiled in this his first attempt, he was determined to rise, like Antæus, from his fall ; and put in claims for higher and more substantial honours. With this view he conceived the design of one of the noblest and most useful, though at the same time the most laborious work that could possibly be undertaken by one man, viz. *A complete Grammar and Dictionary of our hitherto unsettled Language.*

He drew up a sketch of this great work, in a letter to the late Earl of Chesterfield, then one of his Majesty's principal secretaries of state ; which was afterwards published under the title of "The Plan of a Dictionary of the English Language." I have now the pamphlet before me, pausing at every paragraph, so desirous am I to give an extract from such a judicious, critical, and elegant performance ; but, as the nature of this work will not permit me to publish the letter in full, I dare not touch a *part*, lest I destroy the beauty and symmetry of the *whole*. It is, as far as my judgment warrants me to say, (considering the nature of the subject) one of the richest and most finished critical essays in our language.

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The execution of this work cost him the labour of many years, the letter to Lord Chesterfield, when the plan was already sketched, being dated in 1747, and the whole not finished till 1755; and without doubt, previous to the first mentioned period, he must have made many preparatory collections and observations; but the manner in which it was at last executed, made ample amends for public expectation. Nor did his praises rest with his own countrymen; several of the foreign academies, and particularly the *Accademia della Crusca*, paid him such honours on the occasion, as leave all encomiums in this place entirely superfluous.

When Lord Chesterfield understood this work was undertaken, he encouraged the author to proceed in it; which gave rise to the letter just mentioned; but from some of those unaccountable delays by which patronage is too generally found to cool, his lordship took no manner of notice of it till some little time previous to its publication; then he published two letters, in a periodical paper, called "The World," recommending the author, and the work, vainly enough (though under the disguise of modesty) telling the public, that for his part he should conform himself to the authorities of that dictionary, both in his writing and conversation.

This

This circumstance, attended with some previous personal slights, roused Mr. Johnson's indignation, and he no longer thought it necessary to preserve any terms of friendship with him. In conversation he freely gave his opinion of him, " That he was a

" Lord amongst Wits, and a Wit amongst
" Lords :" and being complimented on his lordship's endeavours to serve him by his two essays in *The World*, he scouted either their utility, or the author's good intentions ; he compared them to " *two little Cock-boats*,
" vainly sent out to partake the triumphs
" of a long and dangerous voyage, without
" risquing the hazards of rocks and quick-
" sand."

Mr. Johnson was not even satisfied with using the shafts of ridicule in conversation, but resented his usage of him in a letter which he wrote his lordship, insisting on being *for ever dismissed his patronage*: this letter I have not seen, but once heard a friend, to whom he read it, repeat some of it from memory ; and it seemed to breathe a spirit of independence, that did great honour to the author's mind : for many years Mr. Johnson refused giving a copy of it; but some time before his death, he gave one to Mr. Langton, with an injunction never to publish it 'till an imperfect copy first appeared, which he judged might be the case, as he had often repeated it to several friends.

Lord Chesterfield, too late, found out the error of neglecting a man of genius, and wanted to court Mr. Johnson back to his patronage, through the mediation of Mr. Dodsley—but in vain: Johnson was not to be shaken from his purpose; and they never spoke together afterwards.

When his lordship, however, found *the scabbard thrown away*, he was not without his resentments in turn, as appears by the following strong allusion to Mr. Johnson, in one of his letters to his son:

" There is a man, whose moral character,
 " deep learning, and superior parts, I ac-
 " knowledge, admire, and respect; but whom
 " it is so impossible for me to love, that I am
 " almost in a fever whenever I am in his
 " company. His figure, without being de-
 " formed, seems made to disgrace, or ridicule
 " the common structure of the human body.
 " His legs and arms are never in the position,
 " which, according to the situation of his
 " body, they ought to be in, but constantly
 " employed in committing acts of hostility
 " upon the Graces. He throws any where,
 " but down his throat, whatever he means
 " to drink; and only mangles what he means
 " to carve. Inattentive to all the regards of
 " social life, he mistimes, or misplaces every
 " thing. He disputes with heat, and indis-
 " criminate; mindless of the rank, cha-
 " racter, and situation of those with whom
 " he

" he disputes. Absolutely ignorant of the
 " several gradations of familiarity, or respect ;
 " he is exactly the same to his superiors, his
 " equals, and his inferiors ; and therefore,
 " by a necessary consequence, absurd to two
 " of the three. Is it possible to love such a
 " man ? No : the utmost I can do for him,
 " is to consider him as a respectable Hot-
 " tentot."

This letter shews that Lord Chesterfield was rather *angry* than *satirical*, as the person of an antagonist, when he is not vain of it, should, by no means, constitute a subject for raillery : Mr. Johnson, however, gave him the *retort courteous*, for on the publication of those letters, being asked his opinion of them, he replied, " They are such as I did suppose
 " Lord Chesterfield would write : They in-
 " culcate the morals of a W——, and the
 " manners of a Dancing-master."

The price which the booksellers paid Mr. Johnson for his dictionary, was *fifteen hundred pounds* ; a sum so inadequate to the labour, and necessary expences incurred, that the Author, *though in the habits of providing for the day that was passing over him*,* found the money all expended before the work was finished. In this dilemma, he called upon the booksellers for an additional *five hundred pounds* ; which was objected to on their party.

* Vide Preface to his Dictionary.

and, by some, called an *imposition*, as departing from the original agreement. He was then obliged to tell them, "the work must be suspended;" but this had no effect; and a law-suit was talked of for some time: at last, after much grumbling, they made a virtue of necessity, and paid him the money.

I have stated the particulars of this transaction, as I have often heard it imputed to Mr. Johnson, that the demand of the additional five hundred pounds was not strictly conformable to his character; but the short answer to this is, that the work could not possibly be finished without it; the author having no other pecuniary resource to apply to; and the first sum, upon a just calculation of the labour and years employed about it, appeared to be not improvidently expended: the demand, therefore, became an act of necessity; and, indeed, that the same bookellers thought so (when interest began to open their eyes a little) is plain, as on the publication of the third edition, they voluntarily complimented him with the additional sum of three hundred pounds.

I cannot dismiss this article, without pointing out to the public a circumstance, which though constantly under their observation, very few have taken notice of, which is, that in Mr. Johnson's definition of the word **ALIAS**, in the octavo edition of his Dictionary, he takes occasion to carry his resent-
ment

ment against the late David Mallet, in a very whimsical, and, perhaps, unprecedented manner : Mallet's original name had been *Malloch*, which he changed soon after he came to London, for *Mallet*; this duplicity, with the character he had for being a *Free-thinker* in religion, so irritated our orthodox author, that he was determined to take his revenge. The word *ALIAS* was the gibbet he chose for this purpose, which he thus exemplifies : " *ALIAS*, a Latin word signifying other-wise; as *MALLET*, alias *MALLOCH*—that is, otherwise *Malloch*;" and here Mallet continues to *bitch* to this day, and will, in all probability, long after the occasion of the example is forgotten.

During the interval of recess, necessary to the fatigue of this stupendous undertaking, Mr. Johnson, amongst other pieces of a more fugitive kind, published his *Rambler*, a series of periodical papers, which came out every Tuesday and Saturday in the year 1750, and continued for two years successively. In the course of so great a number of these papers as this long period demanded, those which the author was favoured with by others, were very inconsiderable, being assisted only in two essays by Richardson (author of Sir Charles Grandison), two by Mrs. Carter, and one by Miss Talbot; and yet on the whole, this work stands in equal, if not superior rank, to the joint efforts of the *literati*.

who were concerned in those celebrated essays *The Tatler* and *Spectator*. What further adds to the credit of the author's genius, is, that he wrote most of these papers on the spur of the occasion---often on a journey---often in a chop-house, &c. as a temporary relief to his mind and necessities---He has often declared this, and added, "That from such circumstances, he never had the most distant notion of their meeting with such public approbation."

The principal merit of this Work consists in disseminating philosophic and moral truths with peculiar force and energy; aided by a rich and variegated imagination, particularly in his Eastern Tales; some of which are the best models of that species of writing in our language. The style, though elevated and grammatically correct, has been thought by some to be bordering rather on the *turgid*; and perhaps there are a few instances which may justify this opinion. In excuse for this it should be considered, that the Author was, at the same time, deeply engaged in exploring and arranging the *orthography* and *derivatives of words*; and it was almost next to an impossibility, that the business of the one should not, in some degree, incorporate with the other. If, as he says himself in the life of Milton, "the rights of Nations and of Kings sink into questions of grammar, when *Grammarians* discuss them;" how difficult

difficult must it be, in the execution of two such different works, to avoid some part of this judgement !

The *Rambler* has already undergone ten Editions ; and has, about two years since, been translated into the Russian language by order of the Empress, who was so pleased with the Work, that she has settled a very handsome pension on the translator ! When the author of the *Rambler* was first told this circumstance, a suffusion of placid joy beamed upon his face, which a person in company observing, he replied — “ I should be ” afraid to be thought a *vain* man, if I did ” not feel myself *proud* of such distinctions.”

It will not, I hope, be thought too minute in this place to remark, (for little things are often found objects of use, as well as *curiosity*, to posterity) that Mr. Johnson was not paid for this work above two guineas per week, though the Booksellers have since made by it above five thousand pounds.

Upon the very great repute of the *Rambler*, the University of Oxford complimented him with the degree of *Master of Arts*, and some years afterwards he received the degree of *Doctor of Laws* from the University of Dublin, which was finally followed up by that of Oxford conferring the like honour on him in full convocation.

The celebrity of two such productions, very justly placed Dr. Johnson at the head

of the Literary profession. His name was a tower of strength to any publication, and the Bookseller was thought successful who could engage him in any line suitable to his talents. Perhaps, buoyed up a little too much with this opinion, he soon after the publication of his Dictionary, made a proposal to a number of Booksellers convened for that purpose, of writing a *Dictionary of Trade and Commerce*. This proposal went round the room without his receiving any immediate answer, at length a well known son of the trade, since dead, remarkable for the abruptness of his manners, replied, "Why Doctor, what the D—l do you know of trade and commerce?" The Doctor very modestly answered, "not much, Sir, I confess in the practical line—but I believe I could glean, from different authors of authority on the subject, such materials as would answer the purpose very well."

The proposal, however, fell to the ground; and it is no more than probable it was happy for the Doctor's reputation it did so.

On the fifth of April, 1750, The Masque of Comus, was acted at Drury Lane Theatre, for the benefit of Milton's granddaughter. Here an opportunity presented itself to Dr. Johnson, to do a substantial honour to the memory of our great poet, by contributing to the necessities of his descendant.—He accordingly, not only wrote the

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Prologue on that occasion, but announced the play by the following letter, which appeared in *The General Advertiser*, the day before its representation.

" That a certain degree of reputation is acquired merely by approving the works of genius, and testifying a regard to the memory of authors, is a truth too evident to be denied; and therefore to ensure a participation of fame with a celebrated Poet, many who would perhaps have contributed to starve him when alive, have heaped expensive pageants upon his grave.

" It must, indeed, be confessed, that this method of becoming known to posterity with honour is peculiar to the great, or at least to the wealthy; but an opportunity now offers for almost every individual to secure the praise of paying a just regard to the illustrious dead, united with the pleasure of doing good to the living. To assist industrious indigence, struggling with distress and debilitated by age, is a display of virtue, and an acquisition of happiness and honour.

" Whoever, then, would be thought capable of pleasure in reading the works of our incomparable Milton, and not so destitute of gratitude as to refuse to lay out a trifle in a rational and elegant entertainment for the benefit of his living remains, for the exercise of their own virtue, the encrease of their reputation, and the pleasing consciousness of doing

doing good, should appear at Drury-Lane Theatre to-morrow, April 5, when Comus will be performed for the benefit of Mrs. Elizabeth Foster, grand-daughter to the author, and the only surviving branch of his family.

"N. B. There will be a new prologue on the occasion, written by the author of Irene, and spoken by Mr. Garrick; and, by particular desire, there will be added to the Masque a dramatic satire, called Lethe, in which Mr. Garrick will perform."

It is not a little painful to observe, that notwithstanding those efforts with 20l. given by Mr. Tonson, and a large contribution, brought by Dr. Newton---The whole receipt of the House produced but, *one hundred and thirty pounds.*

In the year 1753, Dr. Johnson lost his wife, the friend and companion of many years, and one who struggled with him "against inconvenience and distraction, sickness, and sorrow *," with great conjugal firmness. He lamented her death with a grief which did honour to his feelings, and afterwards celebrated her memory by the following affectionate Latin epitaph, inscribed on a black marble grave stone, in Bromley Church, county of Kent.

* Vide the Preface to his Dictionary.

Hic conduntur reliquiae
ELIZABETHÆ
 Antiqua JARVISIORUM gente,
 Peatlingæ, apud Leicestrenes, orice;
 Formosæ, cultæ, ingeniosæ, pizæ;
 Uxoris, primis nuptiis, HENRICI PORTER,
 secundis, SAMUELIS JOHNSON,
 Qui multum amatam, diuque desletam,
 Hoc lapide contexit.
 Obiit Londini, mense Mart.

A. D. MDCCLIII.

The following year was distinguished by another loss,—the death of his old friend and principal employer Edward Cave, who was the first projector and publisher of the *Gentleman's Magazine*; a periodical Pamphlet, which for many years succeeded beyond every thing of the kind ever known, and still holds a principal credit amongst the accumulated monthly publications.

Gratitude to an old friend was always a predominant feature of the Doctor's character; he accordingly wrote his life (which was first published in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, and since collected in Davies's *Fugitive Pieces*) where he pays a tribute of affection to his memory. In this life he likewise states the rise of that Magazine, which, as it was the first production of the kind, deserves particular notice.

" When Mr. Cave first formed this project, which was in the year 1731, he was so

far

far from expecting the success which he afterwards found, and others had so little prospect of its consequences, that though he had for several years talked of his plan amongst printers and booksellers, none of them thought it worth the trial. That they were not restrained by their virtue from the execution of another man's design, was sufficiently apparent, for as soon as that design began to be gainful, a multitude of Magazines arose and perished; only the *London Magazine*, supported by a powerful association of booksellers, and circulated with all the art and all the cunning of trade, exempted itself from the general fate of Cave's invaders, and obtained, though not an equal, yet a considerable sale.---To this undertaking he owed the affluence in which he passed the last twenty years of his life, and the fortune which he left behind him."

Dr. Johnson frequently spoke of this man, with that satisfaction which people after passing the storms of life, generally find in looking back to the little incidents of their outset. He always concluded with saying, "Cave was
 "an honest man," but then, continued he,
 "he was a penurious paymaster, he would
 "contract for lines by the hundred, and ex-
 "pect the long hundred into the bargain."

Of this industrious and intelligent printer thus presented to my mind, it likewise brings to my recollection an anecdote I heard Dr. Johnson

Johnson

Johnson tell of Cave's wife, which is not only curious, but should serve as an example to others, at least not to be guilty of the same neglect.

When Cave got into affluence, it was usual with him, upon the receipt of any large sum of money, to make Mrs. Cave the cash-keeper.---The frequenc ey of this, and the dependence which he had on her management of it, tempted her occasionally to practise "the little pilfering temper of a "wife;" she therefore by degrees accumulated a considerable sum, which Cave knew nothing of. Her last illness was an asthma; and though she every day grew worse, she reserved this secret from her husband till her breath grew so short, that she had only time to tell him "she had concealed a part of the money which he occasionally gave her, which she laid out in India bonds." She was immediately after this seized with convulsions, and died before she had time to say where they were hid, or in whose possession they were deposited. Cave on her death made every possible enquiry after his property, but such is the integrity of some friendships, the bonds were never afterward found.

In 1756, we find the Doctor concerned in a periodical paper, published by T. Gardner, in the Strand, called "The Universal Visiter," in conjunction with a number of names that promised to give permanency,

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and reputation to any work.---But as too many doctors sometimes, only, dispatch the patient the quicker, what from the indolence of some, or the opposite opinions of others, it did not continue above a year. These monthly numbers have been since collected in one volume, and to those who may be curious in distinguishing the different authors, by their different signatures.---They are informed that those marked thus **, were written by Doctor Johnson; those with the letter S, by Christopher Smart; those with the letter R, by Richard Rolt; those with the letter G, by David Garrick, and those with the letter P, by Doctor Percy the present Bishop of Dromore.

In the same and subsequent year Doctor Johnson wrote *sixteen* numbers in another periodical work, published by Faden, in Fleet Street, entitled, "The Literary Magazine." Those essays consist partly in a Review of Books, and partly in an answer to a pamphlet published by Jonas Hanway, called "The Eight days Journey," in which the author takes occasion to reprobate in very aggravated terms, the unconstitutional use of tea drinking.

This last attack was touching the Doctor upon his favourite string; tea was to him, what gold is to the miser; honours to the ambitious,---it was the solace of his morning and evening hours; the refuge from his labours,

bourrs, the repast for his friends ; in short it was so much the great *desideratum* of his life, that he often declared " he never felt the " gripe of poverty but when he wanted " money to buy tea."—No wonder then, that rous'd by this attack upon his *da ly liquor*, he animadverted upon the pamphlet. Hanway answered him, and unfortunately for him having mentioned in this answer that " *he put horses to his chariot,*" and was a *Governor of the Foundling Hospital.*—Johnson replied to this little swell of vanity, in the following vein of irony, which deserves to be recorded.

" I now find (says he) but find too late, that instead of a writer, whose only power is his pen, I have irritated an important member of an important corporation ; a man, w^ro as he tells us in his letters, puts *horses to his char. ot.*

" It was allowed to the disputants of old to yield a controversy with little resistance to the Master of Forty Legions.—Those who know how weakly naked truth can defend her advocates, would forgive me, if I should pay the same respect to a *Governor of the Foundlings.*

" *Of the author* I unfortunately said, his injunction was somewhat too magisterial : that I said, before I knew he was a *Governor of the Foundlings!* But he seems inclined to punish me, as the *Czar* made war upon Sweden, because he had not sufficient honors paid

paid him when he passed through the country in disguise. Yet, was not this irreverence without extenuation. Something was said of the merit of *meaning well*, and the Journalist was declared to be a man, *whose failings might well be pardoned for his virtues*. This is the highest praise which human gratitude can confer on human merit; praise, that would have more than satisfied *Titus*, or *Augustus*; but which I must own to be inadequate and penurious, when offered to "this Member of an important Corporation!" &c. &c. &c.

He has however so much kindness for me, that he advises me "to consult my safety, when I talk of Corporations." I know not, what the most important Corporation can do, becoming manhood, by which my safety is endangered. My reputation is safe, for I can prove the fact; my quiet is safe, for I meant well; and for any other safety, I am not used to be very solicitous.

"I am always sorry at the sight of any being labouring in vain; and, in return for the Journalist's apprehensions for my safety, I will own compassion for his tumultuous resentment; since all his invectives fume into the air, and with so little effect on me, that I shall esteem him as one who has the merit of *meaning well*; that I still believe him to be a man, *whose failings may be justly pardoned for his virtues!*"

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The *Rambler* had by this time gained such universal reputation with the public, that the book-sellers made a proposal to Dr. Johnson, to re-commence that species of writing which he did in the year 1758, in a series of papers published every Saturday, called "THE IDLER," since collected in two volumes duodecimo. The essays in this work are rather of a lighter kind than those of the *Rambler*; and as such may be compared to the last impressions of a good print, in which the likeness remains; though the strength is considerably diminished. In saying this, I do not mean generally to disparage the work; its allegories and moral essays, bear the hand of a great master, nor are some of the lighter pieces defective in fancy. I would only say, it is not the *Twin-brother* of the *Rambler*, and as such has not the same claim to celebrity.

During the writing of this periodical work, Dr. Johnson's mother died, and as he has dedicated a paper to her memory, the occasion of which is not generally known, I shall make no apology for giving it a place in those memoirs. I must confess to have another reason, it establishes his character as a dutiful and affectionate son, and if it wanted this additional establishment, that of a sincere and fervent Christian.

No. I
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No. 41. Saturday, January 27.

"The following letter relates to an affliction perhaps not necessary to be imparted to the public, but I could not persuade myself to suppress it, because I think I know the sentiments to be sincere, and I feel no disposition to provide for this day any other entertainment.

At tu quisquis eris, miseri qui cruda poeta
 Credideris fletu funera digna tua
 Hæc postrema tibi, sit flendi causa, fluatque
 Lenis inoffenso vi aque morsque, gradu-

Mr. IDLER,

Notwithstanding the warnings of philosophers, and the daily examples of losses and misfortunes which life forces upon us, such is the absorption of our thoughts in the business of the present day--such the resignation of our reason to empty hopes of future felicity; or such our unwillingness to foresee what we dread, that every calamity comes suddenly upon us, and not only presses us as a burden, but crushes as a blow.

There are evils which happen out of the common course of nature, against which it is no reproach not to be provided.---A flash of lightening intercepts the traveller in his way.

--- The

The concussion of an earthquake heaps the ruin of cities upon their inhabitants. But other miseries time brings, though silently, yet visibly forward by its even lapse, which yet approaches unseen, because we turn our eyes away, and seize us unresisted, because we could not arm ourselves against them, but by setting them before us.

That it is in vain to shrink from what cannot be avoided, and to hide that from ourselves which must sometimes be found, is a truth which we all know, but which all neglect, and perhaps none more than the speculative reasoner, whose thoughts are always from home, whose eye wanders over life, whose fancy dances after meteors of happiness kindled by itself, and who examines every thing rather than his own state.

Nothing is more evident than that the decays of age must terminate in death. Yet there is no man (says Tully) who does not believe that he may yet live another year; and there is none who does not, upon the same principle, hope another year for his parent, or his friend; but the fallacy will be in time detected; the last year, the last day must come; it has come, and is past. *The life which made my own life pleasant is at an end, and the gates of death are shut upon my prospects.*

The loss of a friend, on whom the heart was fixed, to whom every wish and endeavour tended,

tended, is a state of desolation in which the mind looks abroad impatient of itself, and finds nothing but emptiness and horror.

The blameless life, the artless tenderness, the pious simplicity, the modest resignation, the patient sickness, and the quiet death, are remembered only to add value to the loss, to aggravate regret for what cannot be amended, to deepen sorrow for what cannot be recalled.

These are the calamities by which Providence gradually disengages us from the love of life. Other evils fortitude may repel, or hope may mitigate; but irreparable privation leaves nothing to exercise resolution, or flatter expectation. The dead cannot return, and nothing is left us here but languishment and grief.

Yet such is the course of nature, that whoever lives long must outlive those whom he loves and honours. Such is the condition of our present existence, that life must one time loose its associations, and every inhabitant of the earth must walk downward to the grave alone, and unregarded, without any partner of his joy, or grief, without any interested witness of his misfortunes, or success.

Misfortunes indeed he may yet feel, for where is the bottom of the misery of man? But what is success to him who has none to enjoy it? Happiness is not found in self-contemplation.

temptation, it is perceived only when it is reflected from another.

We know little of the state of departed souls, because such knowledge is not necessary to a good life. Reason deserts us at the brink of the grave, and gives no farther intelligence. Revelation is not wholly silent---

There is joy in the angels of Heaven over one sinner that repenteth; and surely this joy is not incomunicable to souls disentangled from the body, and made like angels!

Let hope therefore dictate what revelation does not confute, that *the union of souls may still remain;* and that we who are struggling with sin, sorrow, and infirmities, may have our part in the attention and kindness of those who have finished their course, and are now receiving their reward.

These are the great occasions which force the mind to take refuge in religion: when we have no help in ourselves, what can remain but that we look up to a higher and a greater power; and to what hope may we not raise our eyes and hearts, when we consider, **THAT THE GREATEST POWER IS THE BEST?**

Surely there is no man who thus afflicted does not seek succour in the *Gospel,* which has brought life and immortality to light! The precepts of Epicurus, who teaches us to endure what the laws of the universe make necessary, may silence, but not content us---

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The dictates of Zeno, who commands us to look with indifference on external things, may dispose us to conceal our sorrow, but cannot assuage it. Real alleviation of the loss of friends, and rational tranquillity in the prospect of our own dissolution, can be received only from the promises of him *in whose hands are life and death*, and from the assurance of another and better state, in which all tears will be wiped from our eyes, and the whole soul shall be filled with joy.---Philosophy may infuse stubbornness, but religion only can give patience."

The Doctor's affection for his parent did not even stop here.---Not many days before his death, he wrote to a friend in Litchfield, desiring that a large stone might be placed over the bodies of his father, mother, and brother, who were buried in St. Michael's church in that town, (inclosing the following inscription for that purpose) and hoped "it might be done while he was yet alive;"---but what are the hopes of man! death prevented him that pleasing satisfaction, though it cannot rob his memory of such a tribute of filial and fraternal attachment.

H. S. E.

MICHAEL JOHNSON.

Vir impavidus constans, animosus, periculorum immemor, laborum patientissimus; fiduciâ

fiduciâ Christianâ fortis, servidusque; Pater-
familias apprimè strenuus; Bibliopola admo-
dum peritus; mente et libris et negotiis ex-
ulta; animo ita firmo, ut, rebus adversis
diu conflictatus, nec sibi nec suis defuerit:
Lingua sic temperata, ut ei nihil quod aures
vel pias vel castas læsisset, aut dolor vel vo-
luptas unquam expresserit.

Natus Cubleiae in agro Derbienſi, anno
MDCLVI, obiit **MDCCXXXI**.

Apposita est SARA Conjux.

Antiqua FORDORUM gente oriunda; quam
domi sedulam, foris paucis rotam; nulli
molestam, mentis acumine et judicii subtili-
tate præcellentem; aliis multum, sibi parum
indulgentem: Æternitati semper attentam,
omne fere Virtutis nomen commendavit.

Nata Nortoniae Regis, in agro Varvicenſi,
anno **MDCLXIX**; obiit **MDCCCLIX**.

Cum NATHANAELE illorum filio, qui natus
MDCCXII, cum vires et animi et corporis
multa policerentur, anno **MDCCXXXVII**,
vitam brevem pia morte finivit.

In the Spring of 1759, Dr. Johnson pub-
lished his "Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia," a
beautiful little novel, abounding in moral
sentiments, and remarkable for a happy imi-
tation of the Oriental writers. His design in
this was, to shew the futility of our researches

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after happiness, in the various disguises of pleasure which this world produces; and that it is only to be found in our own minds, and a dependance on Providence. Among other topics which this literary gem treats of, is that of "Marriage," which I think is better discussed here than in any other book I ever read, and as such must afford no inconsiderable instruction to all married people.

What probably might have given him the first idea of this novel, was his early translation of the *Voyages of Lobo*, whilst he resided at Birmingham, which describes the history, antiquities, government, religion, and manners of the Abyssinians; and to this translation we are, perhaps, indebted for that richness of imagery, and critical knowledge of the Eastern customs, so admirably displayed in the *Rambler* and *Idler*.

But from whatever source he drew his materials, what first suggested the idea of making use of them, should not be withheld from the public,—it was the want of twenty pounds, to enable him to go down to Litchfield, to pay the last duties to his mother who was dying. After having sketched the design of it, he shewed it to a bookseller, and told him his exigencies; but the other refused advancing any money till he had seen the whole of the copy. The Doctor sat down with perseverance to comply with his request; but before

fore he had finished it his mother died. He afterwards sold it to another bookseller.

Soon after the accession of his present Majesty, Lord Bute, who was then First Lord of the Treasury, being determined to pension his countryman, Mr. John Home, author of the tragedy of Douglas, he thought it prudent to associate him with an Englishman of established literary reputation. Johnson was immediately thought of; but what from the natural ruggedness of his temper, and the bent of his political opinions, it was thought hazardous to make the application. His constant and intimate friend, Mr. Murphy, however, undertook it, who sought him out, and told him the subject of his message. He received it with evident marks of surprise, and after pausing a few minutes, replied, "No, Sir: "They'll call me pensioner Johnson."— "Suppose they do," says Mr. Murphy, "as you will be conscious of not obtaining that title disgracefully, what's in a name?"— "Very true, Sir," says the other, "I'll consider of it: call upon me to-morrow, and I'll give you an answer." His friend pressed him not to let matters cool, and judiciously pointed out the hazard of procrastination; but he replied, "The question was momentous, and he would not be taken by surprise."

Next day he told Mr. Murphy he would accept it; and in a few days afterwards the

Doctor waited upon Lord Bute to thank him. In this interview they both behaved with equal credit. Upon Johnson's introduction, after expressing his obligations to his Majesty, for this mark of royal favour, he added, " And I accept it the more readily, " as I am conscious of not having obtained " it by once dipping my pen in faction." — " True Doctor," said Lord Bute, " and " what must give further satisfaction to a " mind like yours, I hope you'll never be " asked to dip your pen in faction." Here the conversation ended, and Johnson took his leave; but such was the awkward feel of this patronage to him, that from that hour he never once knocked at his Lordship's door.

" The learned leisure," which this pension enabled him to enjoy, being 300*l.* per year, directed the Doctor to studies more congenial to his mind than those generally suggested by booksellers. He therefore sat down to a new edition of Shakespeare, which he published by subscription in 1765, in eight volumes octavo. The general merit of this work repaid the public expectation so much, that it went through two editions in five years, and a certain literary character, Dr. Campbell, since dead, said of it, " That the preface and notes were worth the whole subscription-money."

Of

Of the merit of some of the notes I have the misfortune of differing from him; but as to the preface, I think it one of the most ingenious and critical we have in our language; it discusses with great fairness the unities of time and place, and without being blindly attached to his great author, speaks enough of his character to assign him that immortality which the united voice of the public for near two centuries have given him. He praises him, above all his cotemporaries, as the poet of nature—The Poet that holds up to his readers a faithful mirror of manners and of life; characters that are the genuine progeny of common humanity; such as the world will always supply, and observation will always find.

In the year 1770, in conjunction with Mr. Steevens, Doctor Johnson enlarged his Shakespeare to ten volumes octavo, and thus by a combination of great abilities, it is become at present our first book on the subject.

On the night previous to the publication of the first edition, he supped with some friends in the Temple, when much pleasantry passing on the subject of commentatorship, he took no notice of the hours till the clock struck five, then starting as from a reverie he exclaimed, “ This may be sport “ to you, Gentlemen, but you don’t confi-“ der there are but two hours between me “ and criticism.”

The third edition of *Johnson and Steevens's Shakespeare* is now in the press, under the inspection of a gentleman every way fitted to the task by a critical knowledge of the drama, as well as the comparative merit of our best, and oldest English writers.

Dr. Johnson's political works, consisting of " Taxation no Tyranny — Falkland Island — The Patriot — and False Alarm," were published at different intervals, from about the year 1769 to 1775 ; and perhaps it would be more for the credit of his memory that they were never undertaken, as too many are inclined to think, and in other respects his admirers, he has sacrificed his talents to the support of Ministerial errors and corruption. I cannot entirely agree in this opinion ; as, however, the positions he laid down may be *politically wrong*, all those who knew his heart must give him credit for *thinking them right* ; perhaps the acrimony with which he has treated some of the leaders and measures of Opposition was his greatest fault, and this undoubtedly should preclude him the character of an *impartial politician*.

In the course of his political labours the Doctor expressed, or rather renewed a desire which " he had so long conceived, that he scarcely remembered how the wish was originally formed," to visit the Hebrides, or Western Islands of Scotland. In this journey, which was begun in the year 1773,

he was accompanied by Mr. Boswell, author of the History of Corsica, and other literary pieces, "A companion," (says the Doctor in his account of this Journey) "whose acuteness would help my enquiry, and whose gaiety of conversation and civility of manners are sufficient to counteract the inconveniences of travel in countries less hospitable than those we have passed."

After his return, and about the beginning of the year 1775, he published his remarks, under the title of "A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland."

This journey, though performed through some of the most uncultivated parts of Scotland, he has made very entertaining--He shews beside an accurate account of the country, the eye of a philosopher piercing through the manners, customs, and wants of an uncivilized people; and then compares them with the luxuries and artifical wants of more refined life. He has repaid his debts of hospitality, by several honourable and grateful accounts of the *Lairds* and leading men at whose houses he was entertained; and even in lower life, he has condescended to give some pleasing portraits of virtue and rural simplicity.

In the course of this work, he goes into an enquiry concerning the authenticity of Ossian's Poems, published some years since by Mr. James Mc. Pherson, the result of

which enquiry he gives us in the following words, p. 273 and 274.

" I believe they never existed in any other form than that which we have seen.—
 " The Editor, or Author never could shew the original, nor can it be shewn by any other: to revenge reasonable incredulity, by refusing evidence, is a degree of insolence with which the world is not yet acquainted, and stubborn audacity is the last refuge of guilt: it would be easy to shew it if he had it--but whence could it be had? It is too long to be remembered, and the language formerly had nothing written. He has doubtless inserted names that circulate in popular stories, and may have translated some popular ballads, if any can be found; and the names and some of the images being recollected, make an inaccurate auditor imagine, by the help of Caledonian bigotry, that he has formerly heard the whole."

Some part of this passage gave offence to the Editor of Ossian's Poems, and an epistolary altercation is said to have ensued. Which of them was right, in respect to the authenticity of the Poems, would be rashness in me to decide, seeing that after much literary dispute on the subject, it is still unsettled: but that the Doctor differed in opinion with the Editor rather too coarsely, I believe, impartiality will allow. " An author no doubt
 " may

" may be considered as a general challenger, whose writings every body has a right to attack ;" but it is of much importance to the credit of an assailant, that to a proportioned degree of judgment and information, he brings good temper and impartiality.

Tho' we do not find the Doctor employed in any capital work about this period, his muse was not idle in the service of his friends. He wrote the Prologue to the comedy of the Good-natured Man, for Dr. Goldsmith; and on the Doctor's death which happened some years afterwards, paid a tribute of respect to his memory, by an elegant Latin inscription, which is since placed on his monument in Westminster Abbey.

For the widow of the late Mr. Hugh Kelly he likewise wrote an Occasional Prologue to the "Word to the Wise," performed for her benefit after her husband's decease. This comedy was originally brought out by Mr. Kelly, in the year 1770, but was damned on the second night of performace, without a fair hearing, by the volence of a party, who opposed the author as a ministerial pensioner. The writer of this account was present at both representations, and he hopes never again to see such partial treatment within the walls of a theatre; where an author, fairly putting himself on the audience as on a jury, to try the merits of his piece, is condemned

on what does not come in evidence before them.

Whilst I am dwelling upon this circumstance, I cannot avoid mentioning a mode of damnation, (which then appeared to me to be quite new) practised by some professed enemies of Mr. Kelly, the second night of representation.

A body, consisting of about twenty people, spread themselves nearly in the center of the pit, with a leader at their head, to give them the cue. He accordingly watched all those little mistakes in representation, which will sometimes unavoidably happen, together with all those weak passages, or familiar words in the scene, and instantly turning them to his own advantage, set up a horse laugh, which was followed by his whole corps.

Unquestionably there was much malice in this procedure, but at the same time it must be confessed there was great generalship.-- Hissing rather provokes indignation, than begets partizans--but laughing is often an irresistible impulse, which becomes contagious from example, and thus gains involuntary proselytes. That this was the case on that night was very clear, as the laughers became the majority, and the play was withdrawn.

Though Mr. Kelly failed in the representation of this comedy, he did not in the success of it--he printed it by subscription,

by

by which he got 800l. and thus obtained some proof that the sense of the public *out of doors* did not agree with that of his judges *within*.

Here so long a pause happened in Dr. Johnson's literary pursuits, that most people thought they were at an end. His age and growing infirmities encouraged this opinion, and he was at times heard to say, "he thought "he had written enough." However, an accident took place, which made him alter this resolution, and gave a new accession of fame to his character as a writer.

About the year 1778, the Booksellers having agreed to publish a body of English Poetry, they applied to Doctor Johnson to write Prefaces to the works of each author. He accepted their proposals, and the agreement was struck for two hundred pounds. The design at first was no more than that which we find in the French Miscellanies; containing a few dates, with a general character, and the engagement was made agreeable to this design: but the flowers of English poetry sprung up so agreeably under the cultivation of the Doctor's hand, that he voluntarily enlarged his plan, both in regard to the lives and critical remarks, "not without the "honest desire" (as he expresses himself in the advertisement to that work) "of giving "useful pleasure."

When the life of Cowley, which was the first specimen, was finished, the great variety of matter and accurate criticisms, which he bestowed on that author, gave the booksellers the most certain prospect of success. The Doctor's powers had been thought to be rather on the decline, but by this and the subsequent lives, the public saw him flourish in a green old age, adding fresh vigour to his fancy, and additional experience to his judgment. His style too, which in *The Rambler* more particularly, was thought *turgid*, was admitted to be much improved, so that, when the booksellers published the whole of the lives in four volumes octavo (independent of the works of the British Poets) the sale became universally rapid, and the book is now become as great a favourite in the libraries of Europe, as any of the Doctor's most celebrated pieces.

That there is much learning and great reach of mind in this performance, I readily admit; but yet there are some few passages that I wish, for the Doctor's memory, he had left out. In the life of Waller particularly, he charges Hampden with being "*the zealot of rebellion,*" forgetting that he himself becomes a *partizan* by this charge. In the life of Milton, he attributes to that great man the character of being "*severe and arbitrary.*---That he thought *woman* "*made only for obedience, and man only for rebellion.*"

“ *bellion.*” And in another place, speaking of Milton’s brother, Christopher, who was bred to the law, and made a judge by King James the Second, he remarks, “ but his “ constitution being too weak for business, “ he retired before any *disreputable compliances* “ became necessary :” by this remark, in some degree anticipating the line of conduct he would pursue under such circumstances.

In the life of Congreve, he commits himself to Criticism with a looseness unbecoming the general chastity of his pen : “ of his “ plays (says he) *I cannot speak distinctly,* “ *for since I inspected them, many years have* “ *passeſ*; but what remains upon my memory is, that his characters are commonly “ fictitious and artificial, with very little of “ nature, and not much of life.

“ His scenes exhibit not much of imagery “ or passion : his personages are a kind of “ intellectual gladiators ; every sentence is to “ ward or strike ; the contest of smartness is “ never intermitted ; his wit is a meteor play- “ ing too and fro, with alternate corrusca- “ tions. His comedies have therefore, in “ some degree, the operation of tragedies ; “ they surprise rather than divert, and raise “ admiration oftner than merriment.”

Surely in giving so harsh and particular a criticism, on such an established author as Congreve, he ought not to have trusted to

the

the *recollection of many years past*, particularly when the materials for more recent information were so near at hand. But these are little blemishes that perhaps are to be found in all works of any magnitude; fits of *petulance* and *indolence* will seize us at the desk, as in the more momentous affairs of life; it is by the general merit of the *writer*, as of the *man*, that his character ought to be ascertained.

The very great success of the Lives of the British Poets, induced the booksellers to make him a present of one hundred pounds more than they had agreed for, and on going to press with the third edition, they added another hundred pounds to the former.

And here it is to be observed, as a circumstance highly to the honour and integrity of Dr. Johnson's character, that when the assignment of those Lives was carried to him, he objected to the covenant, (undertaking to assign the eventual term of fourteen years, which would devolve to him if he lived to the end of the first period stated by act of parliament) saying, "it would be establishing a precedent which might be injurious to future authors:" --- he at the same time jocularly added, "why even then I shall be but eighty-six."

I mention this fact merely to shew that he was influenced by the purest motives in this transaction, and which in the first edition of this

this work, from not being so minutely informed, I had, in some respect, mistated.

The Doctor now determined to cease from his literary labours. He had reached his seventy-second year, and found the infirmities of old age growing fast upon him. He had likewise wisdom enough to see he had stopped at the proper time, in the full career of reputation; and that many authors passing beyond these limits, instead of reaching additional fame, had sometimes found disgrace.

He therefore composed himself for the quieter scenes of life, by making excursions to the country in summer, and enjoying the conversation of his friends in winter. Litchfield, the place of his nativity, was his general route. Here he found great pleasure in visiting those places which were the favourite haunts of his earlier days, and conversing with those friends whom the ravages of time had spared. At one period he obliged the master of the school where he had been educated, to restore to the boys an annual entertainment of *Furmenti*, which had been the custom in his days, but had for some years been discontinued; and at another, he has been caught with his hat, coat, and wig off, leaping over an old rail in a field, because it was the favourite exercise of his boyish days.

His fortune enabled him to live in this manner, as the pension he enjoyed from the

CROWN,

crown, with the addition of his former earnings, always governed by a proper œconomy, gave him the full extent of the *otium cum dignitate*.

But whilst life was thus evenly ebbing to its close, with only the interruption of some occasional sickness incident to old age, he was, during the night in the summer of 1783, attacked with a paralytic stroke, at his house in Bolt-court, Fleet-street, which deprived him of the powers of speech. He awoke with the attack; and as religion was ever uppermost in his hours of retirement, he attempted to repeat the Lord's prayer in English---but could not---he attempted it in Latin with the same effect---at last he succeeded in Greek. He immediately rung the bell, but on the approach of his servant, could not articulate a syllable. Feeling, however, that he retained the full use of his senses, he signified a desire for pen, ink, and paper, and wrote the following note to Mr. Allen, a printer, who lived next door to him; a very honest, virtuous, good man, who had been his intimate and confidential friend for many years, and at whose death (which happened suddenly last summer) the Doctor said, "he never knew a man fitter to stand in the presence of his God."

" DEAR

"DEAR SIR,

"It hath pleased Almighty God this morning to deprive me of the powers of speech; and as I do not know but that it might be his further good pleasure to deprive me soon of my senses, I request you will, on the receipt of this note, come to me, and act for me, as the exigencies of my case may require.

I am sincerely your's,

S. JOHNSON."

"To Mr. Edmund Allen."

Mr. Allen immediately attended him, and sent for his usual physicians, Drs. Heberden and Brocklesby, who in the course of a few months recovered him so much, that he was able to take the air, and visit his friends as usual.

He continued every day growing better; and as he found his spirits much relieved by society, it was proposed by some friends, to establish a club in the neighbourhood, which would answer that purpose. The Doctor seemed highly pleased with the proposal, and after naming some friends, whom he wished to have about him, they met early last winter, at the Essex-head, in Essex street, for the first time, when the Doctor being unanimously

nimously called to the chair, he surprized them with a set of rules, drawn by himself, as Ben Johnson did his “*Leges Convivales*,” which being read, and approved of by the rest of the members, were regularly entered in a book for that purpose.

These rules, to use his own words, are “founded in frequency and parsimony;” and as the public may have some curiosity in seeing so learned a man as Dr. Johnson in his hours of social relaxation, the following is an authentic copy of them, together with the names of the gentlemen who composed the club, as they stood, “on the rota of monthly attendance.”

General Rules of the Essex-Head Club,

commenced the 10th of December, 1783.

“To day deep thoughts with me resolve to drench’d
“In mirth—which after no repenting draws.”

MILTON.

I. THE Club shall consist of twenty-four members. The meetings shall be on the Monday, Wednesday*, and Saturday, of every week; but on the week before Easter-day there shall be no meeting.

* Several of the members being fellows of the Royal Society, this night was afterwards changed to Thursday, for their convenience.

II. Every

II. Every member is at liberty to introduce a friend once in a week, but not oftner.

III. Two members shall oblige themselves to attend in their turn every night from eight to ten o'clock, or procure two to attend in their room.

IV. Every member present at the Club shall spend at least *six-pence*; and every man who stays away, shall forfeit *three-pence*.

V. The master of the house shall keep an account of the absent members, and deliver to the president of the night a list of the forfeits incurred.

VI. When any member returns after absence, he shall immediately lay down his forfeits; which if he omits to do, the president shall require them of him.

VII. There shall be no general reckoning, but every member shall adjust his own expences.

VIII. The night of indispensable attendance will come to every member once a month. Whoever shall for three months together omit to attend himself, or by substitution---nor shall make any apology on
the

the fourth month, shall be considered as having abdicated the Club.

IX. When a vacancy is to be filled, the name of the candidate, and of the member recommending him, shall stand in the Club-room three nights: on the fourth he may be chosen by ballot, six members at least being present, and two-thirds of the ballot, being in his favour, or the majority, should the numbers not be divisible by three.

X. The master of the house shall give notice, six days before, to each of those members whose turn of necessary attendance is come.

The notice may be in these words: [“Sir,
“On —— the — of —— will be
“your turn ^{c^t} of presiding at the Essex-head;
“your company, is therefore, earnestly re-
“quested.”】

One penny shall be left by each member for the waiter.

Nightly Rules of the Essex-head Club.

I. The president will collect seven-pence from each member at his entrance, marking his attendance thus V; and three-pence for every preceding night which is not marked against his name in the book thus V.

II. The

II. The forfeits to be paid over to the landlord. The seven-pence to be considered as part of each member's distinct reckoning.

III. Two letters of notice are to be forwarded each night, by the Penny-post, to the presidents of that day seven-night, as by list of the members.

IV. When the forfeits are paid, they should be noted in the book thus V.

*List of the members of the Essex-head Club,
when first instituted, as they stood on the rota
of monthly attendance.*

Dr. Johnson,

Dr. Horsley,

Dr. Brocklesby,

— Jodderell, Esq;

William Cooke, Esq;

W. Ryland, Esq;

— Paradise, Esq;

Dr. Burney,

John Hoole, Esq;

Francesco Sastres, Esq;

Mr. Edmund Allen, (dead)

Hon. Daines Barrington,

James Barry, Esq;

J. Wyatt, Esq;

Mr. John Nichols,

Edward

Edward Poore, Esq; Rt. Hon. William Wyndham, M. P.
 Thomas Tyers, Esq;
 William Cruikshank, Esq;
 W. Seward, Esq;
 Richard Clarke, Esq; (now Lord Mayor
 of London.)
 William Strahan, Esq; M. P.
 Arthur Murphy, Esq;
 Dr. W. Scott.

The Doctor, when his health permitted it, was a constant visiter, and seemed to reserve his spirits and conversation for those meetings, to the delight and improvement of his friends. In this career of innocent relaxation, the constant bleeding, which he was obliged to undergo for the necessary reduction of an asthma; (with which he was affected many years) brought on a dropsy, which again confined him to his house for some months in the spring of 1784.

In the summer of the same year he grew so much better, that supposing the air of Italy might be the best means of re-establishing his health, he hinted in conversation his desire to undertake that journey. His old and intimate friend Sir Joshua Reynolds, eager to extend a life so dear to himself, and so valuable to the public, and yet thinking the

Doctor's

Doctor's finances not equal to the project, mentioned the circumstance to the Lord Chancellor, adding, "that if his pension "could be encreased two hundred a-year "more, it would be fully sufficient for the "purpose." His Lordship met the proposal cordially, and took the first opportunity to speak of it to the K---g.

His M——y had been previously advertis-
ed of the Doctor's intention, and seemed
to think favourably of it; but whether he
did not conceive the Lord Chancellor's ap-
plication to be direct, or that he understood
Dr. Johnson's physicians had no opinion
of this journey, when it was mentioned to
him he waved the conversation.

The Chancellor, on this, wrote to Dr.
Johnson, informing him, that as the return
of his health might not wait the forms of the
addition to his pension, he might draw im-
mediately upon him for 500l. which lay at
his banker's for that purpose.

So liberal and unexpected an offer from
a quarter where he had no right to expect it,
called forth the Doctor's gratitude, and he
immediately wrote the Lord Chancellor the
following letter:

"My
dear friend & friend to my
sons & self immovable friend & having
now

" My Lord,

" AFTER a long and not inattentive ob-
 " servation on mankind, the generosity of
 " your lordship's offer raises in me no less
 " wonder than gratitude. Bounty so libe-
 " rally bestowed I should gladly receive if
 " my condition made it necessary; for to
 " such a mind who would not be proud to
 " own his obligation? But it hath pleased
 " God to restore me to such a measure of
 " health, that if I should now appropriate
 " so much of a fortune destined to do good,
 " I could not escape from myself the charge
 " of advancing a false claim. My journey
 " to the continent, though I once thought
 " it necessary, was never much encouraged
 " by my physicians, and I was very desir-
 " ous that your Lordship should be told of
 " it by Sir Joshua Reynolds as an event
 " very uncertain; for if I should grow much
 " better I should not be willing, and if much
 " worse, I should not be able to migrate.

" Your Lordship was first solicited with-
 " out my knowledge; but when I was told
 " that you was pleased to honour me with
 " your patronage, I did not expect to hear
 " of a refusal; yet as I have had no long
 " time to brood hope, and have not rioted
 " in imaginary opulence, this cold reception
 " has been scarce a disappointment; and
 " from your Lordship's kindness I have re-
 " ceived a benefit which men like you are
 " able

able to bestow. I shall now live *mibi carior*,
with a higher opinion of my own merit,

I am, my Lord,

Your Lordship's most obliged,

Most grateful,

And most humble servant,

S. J O H N S O N."

To the Right Honourable

the Lord Chancellor.

Sept. 1784.

The Doctor was at Litchfield when he wrote this letter, on his return from Derbyshire, in tolerable good health. However, on his arrival in town in October, Providence thought fit to make all pecuniary as well as medical application unnecessary. The dropsy returned in his legs, which swelled to such a thickness that his physicians had no hopes of his recovery. They however continued to visit him, and prescribe such medicines as were best calculated to compose and quiet his pains. He was likewise occasionally visited by several of his friends, and, at intervals, possessed his usual spirits and flow of conversation.

His constant friend, as well as physician, Dr. Brocklesby, calling upon him one morning, after a night of much pain and restlessness,

restlessness, he suddenly repeated those lines from Macbeth :

— Oh! Doctor,

“ Canst thou not minister to a mind diseas'd,
 “ Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,
 “ Raze out the written troubles of the brain,
 “ And with some sweet oblivious antidote
 “ Cleanse the full bosom of that perilous stuff
 “ Which weighs upon the heart?” —

And when the Doctor replied in the following words of the same author :

— “ Therein the patient
 “ Must minister unto himself.”

— He exclaimed, “ well applied,—that's true,—that's more than poetically true.”

On the Thursday before his death, finding himself grow worse, he insisted on knowing from Dr. B—, whether there were any hopes of his recovery? The Doctor at first waved the question; but he repeating it with great eagerness, the other told him, “ that from the complication of disorders he laboured under, and the advanced state of life he was in, there were but little hopes,” he received his fate with firmness; thanked him, and said he would endeavour to compose himself for the approaching scene.

The next day, a friend of his, hearing this alarming sentence, and anxious to have every possible means tried for his recovery, brought Dr.

Dr. Warren to him ; but he would take no prescription ; he said, " he felt it too late, the soul then wanted medicine and not the body." Upon the Doctor's taking his leave, he told him " he must not go till he had given him his fee, and then presenting him with a copy of his *Lives of the Poets*, begged his acceptance of it, assuring him " that was all the fee he had ever given his other two physicians." NOT For some weeks before he died, he received the sacrament two, or three times in each week ; on the mornings of those days he begged that no body might disturb him, not even his physicians, but in cases of absolute necessity. He spent a great part of the preceding nights in prayer, and in the act of communion he shewed a piety and fervency of devotion that communicated itself to all around him. An intimate friend of his coming into the room one day after this ceremony, the Doctor exclaimed (his face at the same time brightening with a ray of cheerful piety), " oh ! my friend, I owe you many obligations through life ; but they will all be more than amply repaid by your taking this most important advice, **BE A GOOD CHRISTIAN.**" THIS WAS A SYMPTOM OF HIS DISEASE.
 The Saturday night preceding his death, he was obliged to be turned in the bed by two strong men employed for that purpose ; and though he was very restless, yet when a friend

friend asked him in the morning, whether the man he had recommended to sit up with him was wakeful and alert. The Doctor, recovering his pleasantry a little, replied, "Not at all, sir; his *vigilance* was that of a dormouse, and his activity that of a turnspit on his first entrance into a wheel." The next night he was at intervals delirious; and in one of those fits, seeing a friend at the bedside, he exclaimed, "What, will that fellow never have done talking poetry to me?" He recovered his senses before morning, but spoke little after this. His heart, however, was not unemployed, as by his fixed attention, and the motion of his lips, it was evident he was pouring out his soul in prayer. He languished in this manner till 7 o'clock on Monday evening, the 13th December, 1784, and then expired without a groan, in the 75th year of his age. His body was opened on Wednesday the 15th December, in the presence of Drs. Heberden and Brocklesby, where the causes which produced his last disorder were discoverable, but found impracticable to have been removed by medicine. His heart was *uncommonly large*, as if analogous to the extent and liberality of his mind: and what was very extraordinary, one of his kidneys was entirely consumed, though he never once complained of any *nephritic*, or gravelly disorder. It is, however, to be conjectured, that he had some

some presentiment of this circumstance, as a few months before his death he had an argument with his physicians, on the possibility of a man's living after the loss of one of his kidneys.

Some time previous to his death he made a will, subscribed only by two witnesses; but telling the circumstances to some friend, who knew he had a freehold of about twelve pounds a year in Litchfield, in right of his father, another was drawn; but so tardy are some of the wisest men, even in the most necessary acts, when they awaken the fears of death—it was only a few weeks before he died, that the blanks were filled up. On the same principle of delay, the revision of many manuscripts was postponed, some of which were burned by the Doctor the week before he died, to avoid being left in an imperfect state. Amongst the rest was one book, out of two, wherein he had noted some hints for writing his life, which he committed to the flames by mistake. Though I have subjoined an authentic copy of the doctor's will to these memoirs, there are two clauses which, in justice to him, ought particularly to be explained, and commented on.—By the first, he has left an annuity of 70l. to his old faithful black servant Francis Barber, who lived with him for neat forty years, and who, by a faithful, and diligent discharge of his duty, has de-

served this mark of his master's generosity and friendship. When he had determined on this legacy for him, he asked Dr. Brocklesby, who happened to be sitting with him, how much people in general left to their favourite servants? the other answered him, from twenty to fifty pounds a-year, but that no noblemen gave more than the last sum: "Why then," says the Doctor, "I'll be *Nobilissimus*, for I have left Frank *seventy pounds* a-year; and as it probably will make the poor fellow's mind easy, to know that he will be provided for after my death, I'll be obliged to you to tell him of it."

If we compare this generous action with that of his brother poet *Pope*, how superior Dr. Johnson rises in generous feelings and grateful remembrance of faithful services! When the bard of Twickenham died, he left but *one hundred pounds* to his favourite servant John Searle, and *one more* on the death of Mrs. Martha Blount, which was eventual; and yet he distinguishes this man, in his epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot, under the character of *good John*.

"Shut, shut the door, good John, fatigued I said,
"Tie up the knocker, say, I'm sick, I'm dead."

And Dr. Warburton, who had an opportunity of knowing the fact, calls him, in a note upon this passage, "his old and faithful servant." But compliments pass from

the head, generous actions arise from the heart.

The other clause does his memory equal honour. When Dr. Johnson's father died, which is now above thirty years ago, he owed Mr. Innys, a bookseller, who lived in Paternoster Row, thirty pounds ; after many enquiries the Doctor found out the descendant of this man, and has left him the sum of *two hundred pounds*, as a compensation for the loss of the principal, and interest for so many years. By a computation of the Doctor's fortune, the whole is estimated at about *two thousand pounds*, which, with the pension of three hundred pounds a year, he enjoyed during his life, it seems somewhat singular that he should desire, or at least *connive* at the proposed encrease of that pension to enable him to travel. Two hundred pounds a-year was all the sum required, and as this at farthest, could not be wanted above two years, his fortune, coupled with the situation and time of life he stood at, could very well afford such a deduction, without breaking that line of independence which ought inseparably to belong to such a character.

From a sudden combination of those circumstances, therefore, it might be imagined, that the Doctor, with all his philosophy, had caught that almost inseparable vice of old age, *avarice*; but when it is considered, that a principal part of his fortune lay in the pub-

lie funds, which he could not dispose of without a very material loss—and the rest was in private securities, which might require time to call in,—I trust these facts will clear him from that imputation. Indeed, what puts his immediate want of money beyond all manner of doubt, is, that his pension was under a mortgage to a particular acquaintance, and only cleared off a few days before his death.

So anxious was this good man to discharge every part of his moral character with punctuality, that some time before his death he sat down to recollect what little sums he might owe in the early part of his life to particular friends, which were never given with a view to be restored. Among this number he sent a guinea to the son of an eminent printer, which he had borrowed of his father many years before, to pay his reckoning at a tavern.

He likewise recollected borrowing thirty pounds of Sir Joshua Reynolds at a great distance of time; “but this sum (said the Doctor to Sir Joshua, with a manliness of mind which answered for the feelings of his friend being similar to his own) “I intend to bestow on a charity which I know you’ll approve of.” His attention to his duty exerted itself in several little particulars, which might have escaped the generality even of good men, but which at once shewed the calmness of his mind, and the delicacy of his

his friendships—Amongst these may be reckoned his sealing up several bags of letters in order to be returned to the writers of them, lest the confidence they reposed in him should suffer by any want of attention on his part. In short, every action of his life reflected the character of the man, who uniformly illustrated the morals of his pen by the force of his own virtuous example.

Dr Johnson's figure, even in his youth, could never have been calculated either “to make women false,” or give him a preference in the schools of manly, or military exercises. His face was formed of large coarse features, which, from a studious turn, when composed, looked sluggish, yet awful and contemplative. He had likewise nearly lost the sight of one of his eyes, which made him course every object he looked at in so singular a manner, as often to create pity, sometimes laughter. The head at the front of this book is esteemed a good likeness; indeed so much so, that when the doctor saw the drawing, he exclaimed, “Well, thou art an ugly fellow, but still, I believe thou art like the original.”

His face, however, was capable of great expression, both in respect to *intelligence* and *mildness*, as all those can witness who have

seen him in the glow of conversation, or under the influence of grateful feelings. I am the more confirmed in this opinion, by the authority of a celebrated French Physiognomist, who has, in a late publication on his art, given two different etchings of Dr. Johnson's head, to shew the correspondence between the countenance and the mind.

In respect to person, he was rather of the heroic stature, being above the middle size; but, though strong, broad, and muscular, his parts were slovenly put together. When he walked the streets, what with the constant roll of his head, and the concomitant motion of his body, he appeared to make his way by that motion, independent of his feet. At other times, he was subject to be seized with sudden convulsions, which so agitated his whole frame, that, to those who did not know his disorder, it had the appearance of madness—Indeed, to see him in most situations, he was not favourably distinguished, either by nature, or his habits.

But the severer studies, though they may bring with them great learning and great knowledge, are seldom found in the company of the graces. “A man of letters, for the most part, spends in the privacies of study, that season of life in which the manners are to be softened into ease, and polished into elegance; and, when he has gained knowledge enough to be respected, has neglected the minuter

minuter arts, by which he might have pleased.* Of his familiar habits, the principal and most distinguished was that of his being a severe and unremitting student. In his boyish days, he distinguished himself in this line; and when we consider, that some time after this he had been a *teacher*, for many years was employed as a *translator*, and thro' life an *author*, there was but little time left for other pursuits.

His domestic arrangements were always frugal, and he never aspired, even when his fame and reputation were at the highest, to exhibit, either in his dress or establishment, what the world calls a genteel appearance. A little before the death of his wife, he received into his house Mrs. Anna Williams, daughter of Dr. Zachariah Williams, who, tho' blind, possessed such a share of intellectual accomplishments and cheerfulness of disposition as rendered her a very amiable companion to her benefactor, who allowed her twenty pounds a-year to her death (which happened about a year ago,) and otherwise behaved to her with an attention and respect every way becoming his character.

The company of this very valuable woman was a great resource to him when at home, but as 'tis observed by one of Dr. Johnson's friends "that his household gods were neither numerous or splendid enough for the reception

* Rambler, vol. I. p. 85.

of his great acquaintance," he constantly visited them, both in town and country, and none so much as the late Mr. and Mrs. Thrale. In the family of this gentleman he lived a considerable part of the year, and they so perfectly understood his habits, and had such a proper relish for his conversation, that he seemed more *at home* there than anywhere else—He had a *suite* of apartments for himself, both at their town and country house—formed a library principally of his own selection—directed the education of the young ladies, and was, in every respect, so much "the guide, philosopher and friend" of the family, that Mr. Thrale, on his death, left him two hundred pounds, and appointed him one of his executors.

But soon after this event, by one of those trials which neither female pride, or female philosophy can withstand, this friendship was dissolved by the marriage of Mrs. Thrale. The mere report of this had such an effect on him, that for three nights he could not close his eyes. He then wrote her a long letter of five quarto pages, dissuading her from so rash and disgraceful an union. To this he had no answer but a confirmation of the report, on which he exclaimed, in great bitterness of heart,

“ *Varium et mutabile semper fœmina.* ”

From

From the largeness of his person, the demands of nature were expected to be considerable, and Nature was true to herself. He fed without much delicacy, either in choice or quantity—but then his dinner was his last meal for the day. He formerly drank his bottle, it is said with a view to dispel that apprehension, which he dreaded through life, of approaching insanity. But afterwards suspecting danger from that habit, he almost totally abandoned it; “for,” said he, in that moral and philosophic strain which generally distinguished his remarks; “What ferment the spirits, may also derange the intellects, and the means employed to counteract dejection may hasten the approach of madness. Even fixed, substantial melancholy is preferable to a state in which we can neither amend the future, nor solicit mercy for the past.” In weaker liquors, however, he was more profuse, particularly in tea, which he drank at all hours, and on most occasions; and so particularly fond was he of this liquor, that he has often been known to drink twelve or fourteen cups of it between two and three o’clock in the morning, and then go to rest, without feeling the least inconvenience. To the excess of teadrinking, and the too frequent use of acids, which he freely indulged himself with upon all occasions, have been attributed that relaxed state which he was in for many years before his death. He was often told

told of those consequences—but in matter of personal habits, the Doctor would be his own physician.

He always sought the company of women, and was so much delighted with them, that every appearance of philosophic ruggedness was instantly exchanged for gentleness, and the pleasantries of conversation. He often acknowledged this, and at the same time would say, “ There are few things we so universally give up, even in an advanced age, as the supposition, that we have still the power of ingratiating ourselves with the fair sex.”

As he says of Milton, “ fortune appears not to have had much of his care.” In his outset, and for many years afterwards indeed, he had no opportunities ; but for many years past, if fortune had been his object, such extraordinary and useful talents were well entitled to it. The wits of Queen Anne’s time were most of them liberally rewarded by places, some of them to a very considerable amount. The *chaste* Congreve, for instance, enjoyed above twelve hundred pounds per year, which even ministerial changes did not deprive him of; whilst Johnson, as proud a name as any of them in literature—a greater than most of them in *morals*, touched the meridian of his fame, and passed that of his life, without the least favour from government ; and when ministers did think fit to pension him, it was perhaps more to answer the purpose of a temporary

potary policy, than to reward the useful labours of philosophy.

In his traffic with booksellers, he shewed no great regard to money matters. By his dictionary he no more than merely supported himself, during the many years he was employed in that great undertaking. By his Ramblers, I have before observed, he did not get much above two guineas per week; and though it is reasonable to suppose he might, on a representation of the encreasing fame of those valuable papers, have got his stipend increased—he did not solicit it—“his wants being few, they were competently supplied.”

If it should be asked then, how he came to die worth two thousand pounds? it is not to be imputed to the profits of authorship. He had for above twenty years enjoyed a pension of three hundred pounds per year: he had, besides, some legacies; and as his wants were always very few, and those wants made less by his frequent domestication with his late friend, Mr. Thrale, and others, his savings contributed much to this sum. Old age too had been approaching for some time; and it would ill become a man of Dr. Johnson's prudence, to neglect providing for what may continue long, must be a period of inaction, and what always requires additional comforts and conveniences.

And here it is curious to pause on the fate
of

of different authors. Dr. Johnson, who passed a long life in the service of literature; whose writings have done so much honour to his country, and to the general cause of truth, perhaps never earned, *communibus annis*, more than two hundred pounds a year; whilst many a Journalist, and Dramatic Writer, who *never said a thing that a wise man shoudt wish to remember*, have obtained four times that sum, by pandering to the vices and follies of the day.

In literature, perhaps, Dr. Johnson may be considered as the first man in his time—he read most of the languages which are considered either as learned, or polite—Hebrew, Greek, Latin, French, and Italian—he was in particular so perfect a master of the Greek and Latin, that he could repeat, or turn to almost any passage in any author of reputation that could be mentioned. He was not even content with the common stock of ancient learning, but extended it to the authors of the middle centuries, most of whom he could not only name, but point out the scope and design of their writings.

As a Philologist, he stood *unique*, which his *Dictionary of the English Language*, and *the Lives of the British Poets*, bear honourable testimony. His criticisms, in this last production, come forward with all the depth of erudition, aided by a most powerful and discriminating genius; and though he is the first that

that undertook this work *generally*, he has left nothing for his successors to do.

In history he possessed an intimate knowledge of the ancient and modern parts, as well as in the annals and chronologies of most countries. In this useful study he did not merely content himself with exploring the ravages of tyrants, the desolation of kingdoms, the routs of armies, and the fall of empires, but with the different passions, tempers and designs of men—the growth and infancy of political and theological opinions, the gradual increase and declension of human knowledge.

In theology he was not less skilled, being acquainted with the writings of the primitive fathers, our soundest divines, and most of the controversial writers of past and present times. He was bred in the ecclesiastical discipline and politics, which distinguished the royalists in the last century, and he never abandoned them.

His knowledge in manufactures was extensive, and his comprehension relative to mechanical contrivances so extraordinary, that he has often, on a first view, understood both the principles and powers of the most complicated machine.

The few specimens which Dr. Johnson has given us of his poetry, are sufficient in quality, though not perhaps in quantity, to give him a distinguished situation amongst the sons of Parnassus : indeed they,

they are all so highly finished in their kind, as must make every man, who has read them, wish he had written more. This question has been often put to him, and the answer he gave was, "that his *prose* cost him nothing but his present thinking—whilst his *poetry* not only demanded his thoughts in the moment of composition, but unavoidably crossed him in the hours of amusement and conversation." —"The one I can detach from my mind at will, but the other haunts me like a spirit, 'till I have laid it."

Amongst the poets of his own country, next to Shakespeare, he admired Milton; and though in some parts of the life of this great man, he has been rather severe on his political character, there are others wherein he bestows the highest praises on his learning and genius. To this I am happy to add another eulogium, which I heard from him in conversation a few months before his death: —"Milton (said he) had that which rarely fell to the lot of any man—an unbounded imagination, with a store of knowledge equal to all its calls."

But great and extensive as the learning of Dr. Johnson was, (so limited is the power of human understanding) it was far from being universal. It is said he had but an imperfect knowledge of *mathematics* and *natural philosophy*, and was almost totally deficient in the polite arts. He had likewise little of the

practical

practical knowledge of mankind ; for tho' few men could speak with more acumen on the follies and designs of the human heart, his own was too unsuspicuous of the world, to resist, at all times, the infinite variety of its impositions :—he was besides tinctured with superstition, as particularly appeared from his credulity in the celebrated affair of the Cock-lane Ghost, in 1762, and his acquiescence at least, if not belief, in the general doctrine of spirits.

In his conversation, he was learned, various, and instructive, oftner in the didactic than in the colloquial line, which might have arisen from the encouragement of his friends, who generally flattered him with the most profound attention—and surely it was well bestowed ; for in those moments, the great variety of his reading broke in upon his mind, like mountain floods, which he poured out upon his audience in all the fullness of information—not but he observed Swift's rule, “ of giving every man time to take his share “ in the conversation ;” and when the company thought proper to engage him in the general discussion of little matters, no man threw back the ball with greater ease and pleasantry ; his *bon mots* abounded upon those occasions, some specimens of which I have preserved, as no improper appendage to these memoirs.

He always expressed himself with clearness
and

and precision, and seldom made use of an unnecessary word—each had its due weight, and stood in its proper place. He was sometimes a little too tenacious of his own opinion, particularly when it was in danger of being wrested from him by any of the company. Here he used to collect himself with all his strength—and here he shewed such skill and dexterity in defence, that he either tired out his adversary, or turned the laugh against him, by the power of his wit and irony.—But whatever turn the conversation took, he always guarded against the most distant idea of *immorality* or *indecency*; and if either was started in his presence, he was the first to hunt it down by the sharpness of his reproof. He has often declared he had no fixed aversion to any one but men of those principles—and such he considered as his personal enemies.

In this place, it would be omitting a very singular quality of his, not to speak of the amazing powers of his memory. The great stores of learning which he laid in, in his youth, were not of that cumbrous and inactive quality, which we meet with in many who are called *great scholars*; for he could, at all times, draw bills upon this capital with the greatest security of being paid. When quotations were made against him in conversation, he either, by applying to the context, gave a different turn to the passage, or quoted

quoted from other parts of the same author, that which was more favourable to his own opinion:—If these failed him, he would instantly call up a whole phalanx of other authorities, by which he bore down his antagonist with all the superiority of *allied force*.

But it is not the readiness with which he applied to different authors, proves so much the greatness of his memory, as the *extent* to which he could carry his recollection upon occasions. I remember one day, in a conversation upon the miseries of old age, a gentleman in company observed, he always thought Juvenal's description of them to be rather too highly coloured—upon which the Doctor replied—“ No, Sir—I believe not; they may not all belong to an individual, but they are collectively true of old age.” Then rolling about his head, as if snuffing up his recollection, he suddenly broke out:—

Ille humero, hic lumbis, hic coxā, debilis, ambos
 Perdidit ille oculos, et luscis invidet: hujus
 Pallida labra cibum accipiunt digitis alienis
 Ipse ad conspectum cænæ diducere rictum
 Suetus hiat tantūm, ceu pullus hirundinis, ad quem
 Ore volat pleno mater jejuna, sed omni
 Membrorum damno major dementia, quæ nec
 Nomina servorum, nec vultum agnoscit amici
 Cum quo præteritā cœnavit, nocte; nec illos
 Quos genuit, quos eduxit, nam codice Sævo
 Hærædes vetat esse suos, bona tota feruntur
 Ad Phialen: tantum artificis valet halitus oris

Quod

Quod steterat multis in carcere fornicis annis.
 Ut vigeant sensus animi, ducenda tamen sunt
 Funera gnatorum rogos adspiciendus amate
 Conjugis et fratri, plenaque sibonibus urnae
 Hec data poena diu viventibus, ut renovata
 Semper clade domus multis in luctibus, inque
 Perpetuo mæroer, et nigrâ veste senescant.

ADDITIONES 20th SAT. JUVENAL.

Thus translated by Mr. Dryden.

This dotard of his broken back complains,
 One his leg fails, and one his shoulder pains :
 Another is of both his eyes bereft,
 And envies who has one for aiming left.
 A fifth, with trembling lips expecting stands,
 As in his childhood cramm'd by other's hands.
 One who at sight of supper opened wide
 His jaws before, and whetted grinders tried,
 Not only yawns, but waits to be supplied.
 Like a young swallow, when with weary wings,
 Expected food her fasting mother brings.
 His loss of members is a heavy curse,
 But all his faculties decay'd—a worse !
 His servants names he has forgotten quite,
 Knows not his friend, who supp'd with him last night ;
 Not e'en the children he begot and bred,
 Or his will knows them not : For in their stead,
 In form of law,—a common hackney jade,
 Sole heir, for secret services, is made ;
 So lewd, and such a batter'd brothel w—
 That she defies all comers at her door,

Well—

Well—you suppose his senses are his own,
 He lives to be chief mourner for his son ; told
and now
 Before his face his wife or brother burns,
 And numbers all his kindred in their urns.
 These are the fines he pays for living long.
 And dragging tedious age in his own wrong ;
 Grief's always green—a household still in tears,
 Sad pomp ! a threshold throng'd with daily biers,
 And liveries of black for length of years.

But here it will be recollect'd, perhaps, that Dr. Johnson, in the early part of his life imitated this satire from Juvenal, under the title of, "The Vanity of Human Wishes;" and that this circumstance might impress it more strongly on his memory. Those, however, who are anywise acquainted with the business of an author, will know how little of any particular production is left upon the memory after any distance of time. Intent upon *parts*, he perhaps never reads the *whole*, and if he does, it is not with a view to recollect it, but rather to see that it is clear from *false thoughts* and *grammatical errors*. The more of *genius* too that he possesses, the less fond will he be of his own works; the pleasure of such is generally spent at the end of the performance; then feeling the strength of his own powers unabated, he looks abroad for other subjects, which, if they do not produce him more fame, will at least yield him more novelty.

But

But not to press any further argument upon this subject, I can produce a much more surprising instance of Dr. Johnson's memory in the following anecdote, which I give on the authority of a gentleman of known honour and veracity, a particular friend of the Doctor's, and one who is entitled to that name by his knowledge, his candour, and many agreeable qualities.

Some time previous to Dr. Hawkesworth's publication of his beautiful little *Ode On Life*, (since published in Pearch's Collection of poems, in four volumes,) he carried it down with him to a friend's house in the country to retouch. Dr. Johnson was of this party; and as Hawkesworth and the Doctor lived upon the most intimate terms, the former read it to him for his opinion, "Why, Sir," says Johnson, "I can't well determine on a first hearing, read it again, second thoughts are best;" Dr. Hawkesworth complied, after which Dr. Johnson read it himself, approved of it very highly, and returned it.

Next morning at breakfast, the subject of the poem being renewed, Dr. Johnson, after again expressing his approbation of it, said he had but one objection to make to it, which was, that he doubted its originality. Hawkesworth, alarmed at this, challenged him to the proof; when the Doctor repeated the whole of the poem, with only the omission of

of a very few lines; "What do you think now, Hawkey," says the Doctor? "only this," replied the other, "that I shall never repeat any thing I write before you again, for you have a memory that would convict any author of plagiarism in any court of literature in the world."

I have now the poem before me, and I find it contains no less than *sixty-eight* lines.

Next to the extent of his memory, might be classed the very great rapidity of his mind in composition; for tho' in the compilation of his dictionary he has shewn the most patient labour and attention, he has on other occasions proved, that few, if any, could exceed him, *currente calamo*. Of this he has given many examples.

Whilst he was concerned in the Gentleman's Magazine he has declared it was no uncommon effort for him, to write *Three Columns* in an hour, which was faster than most persons could transcribe that quantity, and more by *one third* than the quickest parliamentary reporter can at present perform, with the matter already prepared to his hand. To approve himself in the judgment of Cave, he undertook the *life of Savage*, and finished it in *six and thirty hours*. In one night, after spending the evening with some friends in Holborn, he composed his *Hermit of Teneriff*. And in another wrote the *Preface to the Preceptor*.

The first seventy lines of "*the Vanity of Human Wishes*," he composed in one morning, in that small house beyond the church at Hampstead, and afterwards finished it before he threw a single couplet on paper. The same method he pursued respecting the *Prologue on the opening of Drury Lane Theatre*, changing only one word at the remonstrance of Garrick.—“ And then, said the Doctor, I did not think his criticism just, but it was necessary he should be satisfied with what he was to utter.”

Hitherto Dr. Johnson has been principally spoken of for those qualifications that distinguished him as a scholar, and a man of genius; the noblest parts of his character yet remain untouched, those of an *honest man* and *good Christian*. Pope laments that Roscommon was the only poet in Charles's days, who preserved his pen from the contagious example of the times.

“ Unhappy Dryden! in all Charles's days
Roscommon only boasts unspotted bays.”

But our virtuous author not only restrained his pen from pandering to the follies and vices of the times, but wholly and unremittingly wielded it in the cause of truth and virtue. He considered it as the indispensable duty of an author to endeavour to make the world better, nor would he admit the manners,

ners, or even the ignorance of the age he lived in, as any extenuation of this neglect; "for," said he, "justice is a virtue independent on time and place."

His opinion of vicious authors he farther expresses with a noble indignation, which always forms that strong antipathy of good to bad. "The wickedness of a loose or profane author, in his writings, is more atrocious than that of the giddy libertine, or drunken ravisher, not only because it extends its effects wider (as a pestilence that taints the air is more destructive than poison infused in a draught), but because it is committed with cool deliberation. By the instantaneous violence of desire, a good man may sometimes be surprised before reflection can come to his rescue: when the appetites have strengthened their influence by habit, they are not easily resisted, or suppressed. But for the frigid villainy of studious lewdness, for the calm malignity of laboured impiety, what apology can be invented? What punishment can be adequate to the crime of him who retires to solitude for the refinement of debauchery, who tortures his fancy, and ransacks his memory, only that he may leave the world less virtuous than he found it? that he may intercept the hopes of the rising generation, and spread snares for the soul with more dexterity."

Rambler, vol. 2. p. 134.

G 2

His

His life reflected the purity and integrity of his writings. His friendships, as they were generally formed on the broad basis of virtue, were constant, active, and unshaken. And what rendered them still more valuable, he knew and practised that sort which was most applicable to the wants of his friends. To those in need he liberally opened his purse—To others he gave up his *time*, his *interest*, and his *advice*; and having an honest confidence that this *last* was of some weight in the world, he scarcely missed an opportunity of enforcing it; particularly to young men, whom he hoped would remember what fell from such high authority; even to children he could be playfully instructive—Thus taking every opportunity to make the age he lived in better and wiser.

Of his charities, they were unbounded; not only in relieving temporary objects, but in the regular establishment of many reduced people, that must have perished but for his support. Of the many instances that could be given of this, and which are in the recollection of most of his friends and acquaintances, I shall select but the two following:

Francis Barber, his black servant, was but ten years old when he took him under his care, and at a time when the Doctor was but ill qualified, in point of circumstances, to maintain him. The first thing he

he did was to have him made a *Christian*—He afterwards sent him down to a school in Yorshire for his education; and after some time spent there, brought him up to town and instructed him himself. He had the noblest motive for this extraordinary care in his education, intending to make him a *missionary* in order to instruct his countrymen in the principles of the Christian religion. His parts, however, after repeated and extraordinary trials, not admitting this cultivation, he took him into his service, where he experienced in the Doctor, rather the friend than the master. During his stay here, Barber married, and the Doctor, in consideration of his long and tried fidelity, not only gave him and his wife the constant privilege of living in his house, but left him a very comfortable provision for life.

The above is a fact well known; the other is an instance which I believe to be equally true, as I had it from very respectable authority.

Some years since, the Doctor coming up Fleet-street, at about two o'clock in the morning, he was alarmed with the cries of a person seemingly in great distress. He followed the voice for some time, when by the glimmer of an expiring lamp, he perceived an unhappy female, almost naked, and perishing on a truss of straw, who had just

strength enough to tell him, “she was turned out by an inhuman landlord in that condition, and to beg his charitable assistance not to let her die in the street.” The Doctor, melted at her story, desired her to place her confidence in God, for that under him he would be her protector. He accordingly looked about for a coach to put her into; but there was none to be had: “his charity, however, worked too strong,” to be cooled by such an accident. He kneeled down by her side, raised her in his arms, wrapped his great coat about her, placed her on his back, and in this condition carried her home to his house.

Next day her disorder appearing to be *venereal*, he was advised to abandon her; but he replied, “that may be as much her misfortune as her fault; I am determined to give her the chance of a reformation;” he accordingly kept her in his house above thirteen weeks, where she was regularly attended by a physician, who restored her to her usual health.

The Doctor, during this time, learned more of her story; and finding her to be one of those unhappy women who are impelled to this miserable life more from necessity than inclination, he set on foot a subscription, and established her in a milliner’s shop in the country, where she was living some years ago in very considerable repute.

That

That many men meeting with the same accident, would have relieved such an object, as far as *pecuniary assistance* was necessary, I readily believe — but to forego all forms, and risque the imputation of being her seducer, or at least the partner of her guilt, required such a mind—and such a heart as Johnson's; who feeling the irresistible force of his duty, performed it independent of every other consideration.

From these anecdotes, it might seem unnecessary to speak of his RELIGION, seeing that he so well performed all the great duties it inculcates. But in an age, when great learning has but too often the vanity to oppose itself against the mysteries of revelation, it must be the happiness of Dr. Johnson's friends, to promulgate to the world, that he was, in every sense of the words, “A TRUE AND SINCERE BELIEVER OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.” Nor did he content himself with a silent belief of those great mysteries, by which our salvation is principally effected, but by a pious and punctual discharge of all its duties and ceremonies. When his health permitted it, he regularly attended divine service, and was as regular a communicant. In his illness, he either read prayers constantly himself, or enjoined some friend to do it for him; and in those moments, his fervour and devotion were exemplary.

His last advice to his friends was upon this
G 4 subject,

subject, and, like a second Socrates, though under the sentence of death, from his infirmities, their eternal welfare was his principal theme—To some he enjoined it with tears in his eyes, reminding them, “it was the “dying request of a friend, who had no other “way of paying the large obligations he “owed them—but by this advice.”
Others he pressed with arguments, setting before them, from the example of all religions, that sacrifices for sins were practised in all ages, and hence enforcing the belief of the Son of God sacrificing himself to be a propitiation not only for our sins, but also for the sins of the whole world.

To those whom he suspected to be luke-warm in their creed, he wrote down a short account of what he thought a good Christian should profess, and requested them, as they valued his memory, and their own eternal welfare, that they would read it often, and seriously ponder on the great and important truths it referred to.

Such was the life of SAMUEL JOHNSON! who, whether we consider him as a scholar, a man of genius, or a Christian, filled each character with a degree of eminence and utility, that must render his name an ornament to this country, whilst there is a taste remaining for letters, or morality.

Dr. Johnson was buried in a public manner, in Westminster-Abbey, on Monday,
December

December 20, 1784, at the foot of Shakespeare's monument, in Poet's Corner, near the grave of his old and intimate friend, David Garrick. His pall was supported by the Right Honourable Edmund Burke, Right Honourable William Wyndham, Sir Joseph Banks, Sir Charles Bunbury, George Colman, and Bennet Langton, Esqrs. His executors likewise attended, as did a considerable number of his friends and acquaintances, who sincerely paid this last tribute of affection to his memory. His monument is to be placed in a niche, between that of Handel, and John Duke of Argyle.

An authentic Copy of Dr. JOHNSON's
WILL, extracted from the Prerogative
Court of Canterbury.

IN the name of God. Amen. I SAMUEL JOHNSON, being in full possession of my faculties, but fearing this night may put an end to my life, do ordain this my last will and testament. I bequeath to God a soul polluted with many sins, but I hope purified by repentance, and I trust redeemed by Jesus Christ. I leave seven hundred and fifty pounds in the hands of Bennet Langton, Esq. three hundred pounds in the hands of Mr. Barclay and Mr. Perkins, brewers; one hundred and fifty pounds in the hands of Dr. Percy, Bishop of Dromore; one thousand pounds, three per cent. annuities in the public funds, and one hundred

bundred pounds now lying by me in ready money; all these before-mentioned sums and property I leave, I say, to Sir Joshua Reynolds, Sir John Hawkins, and Dr. William Scott of Doctors Commons, in trust, for the following uses; That is to say, to pay to the representatives of the late William Innys, bookseller, in St. Paul's Church Yard, the sum of two hundred pounds; to Mrs. White, my female servant, one hundred pounds stock in the three per cent. annuities aforesaid. The rest of the aforesaid sums of money and property, together with my books, plate, and household furniture, I leave to the before-mentioned Sir Joshua Reynolds, Sir John Hawkins, and Doctor William Scott, also in trust, to be applied, after paying my debts, to the use of Francis Barber, my man servant, a negro, in such manner as they shall judge most fit and available to his benefit. And I appoint the aforesaid Sir Joshua Reynolds, Sir John Hawkins, and

*Dr. William Scott, sole executors of this my
last will and testament, hereby revoking all for-
mer wills and testaments whatsoever. In witness
whereof I hereunto subscribe my name, and affix
my seal, this eighth day of December, 1784.*

SAM. JOHNSON. (L. S.)

*Signed, sealed, published, declared and deli-
vered by the said testator, as his last will and
testament, in the presence of us, the word two
being first inserted in the opposite page.*

GEORGE STRAHAN.

JOHN DES MOULINS.

*By way of codicil to my last will and testament,
I SAMUEL JOHNSON, give, devise, and be-
queath, my messuage, or tenement, situate at
Litchfield, in the county of Stafford, with the
appurtenances*

appurtenances, in the tenure or occupation of Mrs. Bond, of Litchfield aforesaid, or of Mr. Hinchman, her undertenant, to my executors in trust, to sell and dispose of the same; and the money arising from such sale I give and bequeath as follows, to Thomas and Benjamin, the sons of Fisher Johnson, late of Leicester, and —— Whiting, daughter of Thomas Johnson, late of Coventry, and the granddaughter of the said Thomas Johnson, one full and equal fourth part each; but in case there shall be more grand-daughters than one of the said Thomas Johnson, living at the time of my decease, I give and bequeath the part or share of that one to, and equally between such grand-daughters. I give and bequeath to the Rev. Mr. Rogers of Berkley, near Froome, in the county of Somerset, the sum of one hundred pounds, requesting him to apply the same towards the maintenance of Elizabeth Merne, a lunatic. I also give and bequeath to my god-children,

the son and daughter of Mauritius Low, painter, each of them one hundred pounds of my stock in the three per cent. consolidated annuities, to be applied and disposed of by and at the discretion of my executors, in the education or settlement in the world of them my said legatees. Also, I give and bequeath to Sir John Hawkins, one of my executors, the *Annales Ecclesiastici* of Baronius and *Holinshed*; and *Stowe's Chronicles*; and also an octavo Common Prayer Book. To Bennet Langton, Esq. I give and bequeath my Polyglot Bible. To Sir Joshua Reynolds, my great French Dictionary, by Martiniere, and my own copy of my folio English Dictionary of the last revision. To Dr. William Scott, one of my executors, the *Dictionnaire de Commerce*, and Lectius's edition of the Greek Poets. To Mr. Windham, *Poeta Greci Heroici per Henricum Stephanum*. To the Rev. Mr. Strahan, Vicar of Islington, in the county of Middlesex, Mills's Greek

Tef-

Testament, Beza's Greek Testament, by Stephens, all my Latin Bibles, and my Greek Bible, by Wechelius. To Dr. Heberden, Dr. Brocklesby, Dr. Butter, Mr. Cruickshanks, the Surgeon who attended me, Mr. Holder, my Apothecary, Gerard Hamilton, Esq. Mrs Gardiner of Snowhill, Mrs. Francis Reynolds, Mr. Hoole, and the Rev. Mr. Hoole, his son, each a book at their election, to keep as a token of remembrance. I also give and bequeath to Mr. John des Moulins, two hundred pounds consolidated three per cent. annuities; and to Mr. Sastres, the Italian Master, the sum of five pounds each, to be laid out in books of piety for his own use. And whereas the said Bennet Langton hath agreed, in consideration of the sum of seven hundred and fifty pounds, mentioned in my will to be in hands, to grant and secure an annuity of seventy pounds, payable during the life of me and my servant, Francis Barber, and the life of the survivor of

us,

us, to Mr. George Stubbs in trust for us; my mind and will is, that in case of my decease before the said agreement shall be perfected, the said sum of seven hundred and fifty pounds, and the bond for securing the said sum, shall go to the said Francis Barber; and I hereby give and bequeath to him the same, in lieu of the bequest in his favour contained in my said will. And I hereby empower my said Executors to deduct and retain all expences that shall or may be incurred in the execution of my said will, or of this codicil thereto, out of such estate and effects as I shall die possessed of. All the rest, residue, and remainder of my estate and effects I give and bequeath to my said Executors, in trust for the said Francis Barber, his Executors and administrators. Witness my hand and seal this ninth day of December, 1784.

SAMUEL JOHNSON (L. S.)

Signed,

Signed, sealed, published, declared and delivered by the said Samuel Johnson, as, and for a Codicil to his last will and testament, in the presence of us, who, in his presence, and at his request, and also in the presence of each other, have hereto subscribed our names as witnesses.

JOHN COBLEY.

WILLIAM GIBSON.

HENRY COTE.

Proved at London, with a Codicil, the sixteenth of December, 1784, before the worshipful George Harris, Doctor of Laws, and Surrogate, by the oath of Sir Joshua Reynolds, Knight, Sir John Hawkins, Knight, and William Scott, Doctor of laws, the Executors named in the will, to whom administra-

tion

WHOL

tion was granted, having been first sworn duly to administer.

HENRY STEPHENS.

GEO. GOSTLING.

JOHN GRENE.

Deputy

Registers.

Dec. 13, 1784.

JOHN-

[201]

JOHNSONIANA:

O R,
not but w^t his c^ompany, he alw^yys
BON-MOTS, OBSERVATIONS, &c.

OF THE LATE

DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON.

N. B. The few marked thus * are either told
or alluded to in his life.

UPON the publication of Lord
Bolingbroke's philosophical works by
David Mallet, D Johnson was asked
his opinion of the author.—“ Sir,
says he, I look upon him to be both
a scoundrel and a coward—a scoundrel
for

for loading his blunderbuss up to the muzzle, against the peace and happiness of society, and a coward for leaving David Mallet to draw the trigger."

ESTATE OF THE KING.

Being one night at Drury-lane Theatre, to see Garrick play Macbeth, in one of the most interesting scenes of the play, he and the whole company in the box where he sat were interrupted by the impertinence of a young man of fashion, who insisted on having *a place*, though none was kept for him.—The disturbance continuing for some time, the Doctor cried out with great contempt, “ Pshaw! Sir, how

how can you be so mistaken?—your place lies in the *skilling gallery.*"

A gentleman observing to Dr. Johnson, that there were less vagrant poor in Scotland than in England, and as a proof of it, said there was no instance of a beggar dying in the streets there?

—“ I believe you’re very right, Sir,” says Johnson, but that does not arise from the want of vagrants, but the *impossibility of starving a Scotchman.*”

Pray, Dr. Johnson, “ says a female smatterer in poetry,” which was the greatest poet, Boyce or Derrick?—

“ Oh! madam, (says the Doctor) there

there can be no great difference between a *louse* and a *flea.*"

A gentleman telling Garrick one evening, in company with Dr. Johnson, that he heard Foote had been horsewhipped in Dublin by an Apothecary for taking him off,—Garrick seemed surprised at the circumstance; why, says he, "Foote, I thought, had a patent for mimickry—nobody *takes any notice of him here*, do what he will."

—“Very true, Sir, says Johnson, but you see the fellow's rising in the world.”

An eminent printer complaining to Dr. Johnson, that coming once from Scotland, and letting himself in at the back-

back-door, he surprised his sons surrounded by *bon-vivants*, and almost drunk: "now, Doctor, what would you have me do in such a cafe?"—"Do, Sir, says Johnson, why never come in upon your sons at the back-door again."

The topic turning on the comparative benefits of *conversation* and *reading*, it was observed, that the man of conversation having more *ready money* about him, he was the better calculated to pass through life:—"Not at all, Sir, says Johnson, for though he may now and then have a little *change* about him—you are to consider that man has *no fortune*.

When

When a certain veteran of the stage was introduced to Dr. Johnson, he was afterwards asked what he thought of his conversation?—“ I think, Sir, it is a constant renovation of hope, with an eternal disappointment.”

Dr. Johnson being at dinner at Mrs. Macauley's, the conversation turned on the *equality of mankind*, which the lady of the house contended for with all the energy of a republican. Johnson made a few short answers, in hopes to change the subject, but finding she would go on, he finished his dinner with as much haste as possible, and then giving his plate to the footman, begged he'd take his place: “ Good

and W

G—d

G—d ! what are you about, Doctor," said the lady.—" Oh ! nothing, Ma-dam, but to preserve the *equality of mankind.*"

The emigration of the Scotch to London, being a conversation between the Doctor and Foote, the latter said he believed the number of Scotch in London were as great in the former as the present reign?—“ No, Sir, you are certainly wrong in your belief;—but I see how you’re deceived, you can’t distinguish them now as formerly, for the fellows all come breeched to the capital of late years.”

The above wits, at another time
having

having a conversation about national learning, Foote observed, "however the Scotch were deficient in genius and humour, he believed them to be one of the most learned nations in Europe?"—“ You are very much mistaken upon that point (says the Doctor); the Scotch are somewhat like a ship's crew upon short allowance; every one has a mouthful, but not one of them a bellyfull.”

On receiving the last manuscript sheet of his dictionary, the bookseller desired Johnson might get his money, —“ for, thank God, I have at last done with him?”—The Doctor hearing this, very gravely replied, “ I am

very

very happy that man *thanks God for any thing!*"

"Pray, Doctor," said a gentleman to him, "is Mr. Thrale a man of conversation, or is he only wise and silent?"—"Why, Sir, his conversation does not shew the *minute* hand—but he generally strikes the hour very correctly."

* When Dr. Johnson was first patronised by Lord Chesterfield—the Doctor calling on him one morning, his Lordship was denied to him, tho' seen the moment before looking out of the window. Irritated at this neglect, he resolved to break off all

acquaintance with him, and wrote his Lordship a letter, wherein with great dignity and philosophic pride, he begged leave to be dismissed his patronage for ever.—Some time after this, a gentleman meeting the Doctor in Dodsley's shop, asked him how he could desert a man who had been so serviceable to him as Lord Chesterfield was; particularly by his two papers in the “World,” recommending the use of his Dictionary?—“Serviceable to me, Sir, says Johnson,—in no respect whatever. I had been for years sailing round the world of literature, and just as I was getting into the chops of the channel, his Lordship sends out two little cock-boats, more to

confinis upon a H partake

partake of my triumphs, than to pilot me into harbour!—No,—no,—My Lord Chesterfield may be a *wit amongst Lords*—but I fancy he is no more than a *Lord amongst wits.*"

Pray," says Garrick's mother to Johnson, "what's your opinion of my son David?"—"Why, Madam," replied the Doctor, "David will either be hanged, or become a great man!"

When Mr. Macpherson's translation of Homer came out, a lady remarked to Doctor Johnson, that she had been endeavouring to read it, but the style appeared so *bold*, she could not get through it with any satisfaction!—

" You are perfectly right, Madam," says Johnson, " tis as old as the building of Babel."

Upon the publication of the poems of Ossian, being asked by the commentator on that work, whether he thought any one man living could write such an epic poem? — Johnson replied very gravely. — " O yes! Sir, many men, many women, and many children!"

Sitting one night with a number of ladies and gentlemen, the former, by way of heightening the good humour of the company, agreed to toast ordinary women, and match them with ordinary men. In this round one of

the ladies gave Mrs. Williams, the Doctor's old friend and house-keeper, and another matched her with Dr. Goldsmith. This whimsical union so pleased the former lady, that though she had some pique with the latter in the beginning of the night; she ran round the table, kissed her, and said she forgave her every thing that happened for the *apropos* of her last toast?

"Aye," says Johnson! — This reconciliation puts me in mind of an observation of Swift's, — that the quartels of women are made up like those of ancient kings, there's always an *animal sacrificed on the occasion.*"

Being in company with some *literati*,

one of them deciding on the abilities of a certain author, called him a *dunce*: —“ nay now, says Johnson, you abuse him,—the fellow is no *dunce*, but he’s a great *blockhead by art.*”

“ You knew Mr. Capel, the editor of Shakespeare, Dr. Johnson?” —“ Yes, Sir, I have seen him at Garrick’s!” —“ And, what think you of his abilities?” —“ Great *application*, Sir! Were he and I to count the grains in a bushel of wheat for a wager, he would certainly prove the winner.”

On Doctor Johnson’s return from Scotland, a particular friend of his was saying, that now he had a view of the country,

country, he was in hopes 'twould cure him of many prejudices against that nation, particularly in respect to the fruits—"Why yes, Sir, I have found out that gooseberries will grow there against a south wall, but the skins are so tough, that it's death to the man who swallows one of them."

I remember, says the Doctor, to have given a shilling to a peasant in the Isle of Skey, for half a day's attendance on me, and he was so struck with the liberality of the reward, that he asked with some surprise, whether I meant it all for him?—This raising the laugh against Mr. Boswell, who was the only Scotchman in company,

blot

H 5

—the

—the Doctor went on,—“ I mention this circumstance to shew the humility of the man’s mind ; but had it happened to a peasant of your country, (turning round to an Irish gentleman who sat next him) the probability is, that he would not know what a shilling was.”

When Collins, a dull Herefordshire divine, appeared as editor to Capel’s posthumous notes on Shakespeare, with a preface of his own, containing the following words : “ A sudden and most severe stroke of affliction, has left my mind too much distracted, &c.” The Doctor asked to what misfortune the foregoing words referred ? — Being told

told the critic had lost his wife,—Johnson added, “ I believe that the loss of teeth may deprave the voice of a singer, and that lameness will impede the motions of a dancing master; but I have not yet been taught to regard the death of a wife, as the grave of literary exertions;—but, perhaps I wrong the feelings of this poor fellow, —his wife might have held the pen in his name.—*Hinc ille Lachrymæ.*”

When Dr. Johnson had an audience of the King by appointment in the Queen’s library, in the course of conversation his Majesty asked him, “ why he did not continue writing?”—“ Why, Sire,” says Johnson, “ I thought I

H 6 had

had done enough!" "So should I too, Doctor," replied the King, "if you had not written so well."

When he was in Scotland, amongst other curiosities shewn him, he was taken to a very ancient and high castle, which was reckoned to command the most extensive view of any in the country: "Well, Sir, says the guide, what do you think of this prospect?" — "By much the finest in all Scotland, says the Doctor, for I can here see *the road to England.*" Forgetting an appointment he had to sup with Garrick, 'till near one o'clock in the morning, he sallied out

at that hour, and knocked at his door in Southampton-street.—Garrick putting his head out of the window, told him all the company were gone, and that he and Mrs. Garrick were going to bed.—“ Open the door, David, says the Doctor, I have something to tell you will give you satisfaction.”—This brought down Garrick, who, after letting him in, impatiently asked him what was the news he had that was to give him so much *satisfaction*?—“ Why sit you down there, says the Doctor, and *I'll flatter you.*”

An eminent carcase butcher, as meagre in his person as he was in his understanding, being one day in a bookseller's

seller's shop, took up a volume of Churchill's Poems, and by way of shewing his taste, repeated with great affectation the following line:

Who rules o'er freemen should himself be free.

Then turning to the Doctor,—“What think you of that, Sir, said he?”—
“Rank nonsense, replied the other!—it is an assertion without a proof,—and *you* might with as much propriety say,
“Who slays fat oxen, should himself be fat.”

Many years previous to the Doctor's being pensioned, or his writing any political pieces in favour of government, he was sitting with a lady at Chelsea,

Chelsea, who was flinging him from her bow-window, what a fine prospect it commanded of the country, and in particular of the *palace*? — “What *palace*, Madam, replied Johnson! — There can be no *palace* where there’s no *K*—”

To a certain literary female, who had been persecuting him the whole afternoon, with the coarsest and most incessant flattery, he replied, — “ pray, Madam, before you are so lavish of your praise, ought not you to consider whether tis worth my acceptance, or not.”

After the late Hugh Kelly, author
of

of "False Delicacy," and other theatrical pieces, was introduced to him by Dr. Goldsmith,—the latter asked him how he liked him?—“ Why, Sir, says Johnson, he appears to be a civil, orderly kind of a man enough; but I don’t much wish the acquaintance of those people who *have written more than they have read.*”

* When Lord Chesterfield’s letters to his son first came out, a gentleman was asking the Doctor whether they did not contain great knowledge of the world?—“ O! yes, Sir, says Johnson, very much of modern knowledge. They inculcate the *morals of a w—* and the *manners of a dancing-master.*”

master."—Being asked his opinion of the writings of a certain successful dramatic author, he replied, "They were such as a wise man should be ashamed to remember."

Edward Purdon, * a poor miserable author, knocking one day at Doctor Goldsmith's door to beg charity, a gentleman present hearing who it was,

* This unhappy man was educated at Trinity College, Dublin, but, having wasted his patrimony, he enlisted as a foot soldier. Growing tired of that employment, he obtained his discharge, and became a scribbler in the newspapers, in which situation he died in great distress—The following impromptu epitaph was written on him by Dr. Goldsmith.

"Here lies poor Ned Purdon, from misery freed,
Who long was a bookseller's hack;
He led such a life in this world, 'tis believed,
He never will wish to come back."

said

said “he did not look upon such a man as an object, for that he saw him a few days before walking arm in arm with a person who appeared like a woman of the town ?”—“And is that all, Sir, says Johnson, you have to urge against this man ?—Here, Goldy, carry him out this crown !—What have I to do with *the wants of an animal ?*”

* On the night before the publication of his first edition of Shakespeare, he supped with some friends in the Temple, who kept him up, “nothing loth,” till past five o’clock in the morning. Much pleasantry passed on the subject of commentatorship, when all of a sudden the Doctor looking at his watch, cried out, “This may be

sport

sport to you gentlemen, but you don't consider there are but two hours between me and criticism."

Previous to this convivial meeting, Tonson, the publisher, desired a gentleman to ask Johnson for a list of the subscribers? — "Why, Sir, says the Doctor, I have two material reasons against it? — In the first place I have lost all their names, and in the second I have spent all the money."

— Perhaps, said a gentleman talking to Dr. Johnson on church preferments, after all a *Conge d'Elire* has not the force of a positive command, but implies only a strong recommendation?

— "Very true, Sir, says Johnson, but such

such a recommendation as if I should throw you out of a three pair of stairs window, and *recommend you to fall to the ground.*"

A gentleman paying a visit to Doctor Johnson one morning, just as Mr. R—, a dramatic author, was coming down the stairs, he found the Doctor in a state of perturbation almost equal to convulsions.—“Good G—d! what’s the matter, Sir?” exclaimed the gentleman.—“Matter enough, Sir,—you saw that man going down stairs?”—“Yes, Sir, has he insulted you?”—“Most grossly, Sir, by reading to me the whole of what he calls a tragedy, tho’ I dont know that I ever did any thing to injure the man in my life.”

Dr.

Dr. Robertson paying Johnson a visit whilst he was at Edinburgh, amongst other enquiries after the curiosities he had seen, asked him, whether he had ever been at the *kirk*, if not he would accompany him there the next day.—“ With all my heart, Sir, says Johnson ; I should like to see the *kirk*, because it was once a *church*.”

A gentleman asking him why he hated the Scotch so much ? He replied, “ you are mistaken, Sir, I do not hate the Scotch, neither do I hate frogs, provided they keep in their native element,—but I confess I do not like to have them hopping about my bed-chamber.”

Being asked his opinion of hunting, he said, “ it was the *labour* of the *Savages* of North America, but the *amusement* of the gentlemen of England.”

Being told that his friend Davies, in his *Dramatic Miscellanies*, had sometimes found fault with his notes upon Shakespeare, he replied,—“ Why, Sir, I’m far from being angry with him for that; fame’s like a shuttle-cock, it must be repelled as well as impelled, to keep up the game.”

Being in company with Count Z—, at Lord ——— table, the Count thinking the Doctor expressed himself rather too dogmatically upon some

some subjects, observed, — “he did not at all think himself honoured by the conversation ?” — “ And what’s to become of me, my Lord, who feel myself actually disgraced.”

Among his singularities, his love of conversing with the prostitutes he met with in the streets, was not the least. He has been known to carry some of these unfortunate creatures into a tavern, for the sake of striving to awaken in them a proper sense of their condition. His younger friends, now and then, affected to tax him with less chaffised intentions ; but he would answer — “ No, Sir ; we never proceed to the *Opus Magnum*. On the contrary, I have rather been disconcerted and

shocked by the replies of these giddy wretches, than flattered, or diverted by their tricks. I remember asking one of them, for what purpose she supposed her Maker had bestowed on her so much beauty. Her answer was—“ To please the gentlemen, to be sure; for what other use could it be given me?”

“ Garrick, said he, I hear, complains that I am the only popular author of his time, who has exhibited no praise of him in print; but he is mistaken. Akenside has forbore to mention him.—Some indeed are lavish in their applause of all who come within the compass of their recollection. Yet he who praises every body, praises nobody better than ~~himself~~ ^{body.}

body. When both scales are equally loaded, neither can preponderate."

* When he was told of his friend Mrs. Thrale's marriage with Piozzi, the Italian singer, he was dumb with surprise for some moments, at last recovering himself, he exclaimed with great emotion,

Varium et mutabile semper fæmina.

The author of the life of Socrates, who was as thick as he was long, once called our author "a literary savage;" when Johnson heard of it, he replied—
"Why I expected some such ridiculous observation from a literary punchinello."

Dr. Robert Levet, to whom Doctor Johnson very humanely gave apartments in his house for upwards of thirty years, having most of his practice amongst the poor and middling ranks of life, used to accept of gin, brandy, or any other liquor offered him, in lieu of his fee, sooner than have his skill exerted without any recompence. This singularity Johnson used to rally with great pleasantry ;— at one time he said, “ though he hated intemperance, it was more excusable in Levet than in others, because he became intoxicated on principles of prudence, and when a man cannot get bread by his profession, perhaps he is pardonable to accept of drink.” At

another

another time he would say, — “ Had all Lever’s patients maliciously combined to reward him with meat and strong liquors instead of money, he would either have burst, like the dragon in the apocrypha, through repletion, or have been scorched up like Portia by swallowing fire.”

I have been told, Dr. Johnson, says a friend, that your translation of Pope’s Messiah, was made either as a common exercise, or as an imposition for some negligence you had been guilty of at College. “ No, Sir, replied the Doctor. At Pembroke the former were always in prose, and to the latter I would not have submitted. I wrote it

rather to shew the tutors what I could do, than what I was willing should be done. It answered my purpose; for it convinced those who were well enough inclined to punish me, that I could wield a scholar's weapon as often as I was menaced with arbitrary inflictions. Before the frequency of personal satire had weakened its effect, the petty tyrants of colleges stood in awe of a pointed remark, or a vindictive epigram. But since every man in his turn has been wounded, no man is ashamed of a scar."

To a gentleman who expressed himself in disrespectful terms of Blackmore, one of whose poetic bulls he

happened just then to recollect, Doctor Johnson answered, "I hope, a blunder, after you have heard what I shall relate, will not be reckoned decisive against a poet's reputation. When I was a young man, I translated Addison's Latin poem on the *battle of the cranes and pygmies*, and must plead guilty to the following couplet:

" Down from the guardian boughs the
 nests they flung, John bellow I
" And kill'd they yet unanimated young:"

And that bnsd aid ni osd aid daiW
And yet, I trust, I am no blockhead.—
I afterwards changed the word *kill'd*
into *crush'd.*"

When Dr. Percy first published his collection of ancient English ballads,
I 3 perhaps

perhaps he was too lavish in commendation of the beautiful simplicity and poetic merit he supposed himself to discover in them. This circumstance provoked Johnson to observe one evening, at Miss Reynolds's tea-table, that he could rhyme as well, and as elegantly, in common narrative and conversation. For instance, says he,

As with my hat upon my head

I walk'd along the Strand,

I there did meet another man

With his hat in his hand.

Or, to render such poetry subservient
to my own immediate use,

I therefore pray thee, Renny dear,

That thou wilt give to me,

With I

With cream and sugar soften'd well,

Another dish of tea.

Nor fear that I, my gentle maid,

Shall long detain the cup,

When once unto the bottom I

Have drank the liquor up.

Yet hear, alas ! this mournful truth,

Nor hear it with a frown :—

Thou can't not make the tea so fast

As I can gulp it down.

And thus he proceeded through several more stanzas, till the Reverend Critic cried out for quarter.

In a conversation on the infancy of

the American war,—a gentleman present giving some remarkable instances of the ill-timed lenity and procrastination of hostilities on our side; the Doctor observed, “*that a prince who made war upon his enemies tenderly, often distressed his subjects cruelly.*”

Being asked his opinion of Quin’s reading Milton,—he said it was too much like a *player*, as he imitated the several characters in the poem, whereas his business was that of a *narrator*, not an *imitator*.

* Speaking of Milton’s talents, he said they were of that species which rarely fell to the lot of any one man; viz.

viz.—“ An unbounded imagination, with a store of knowledge equal to all its calls.”

He used to say of Gray, the poet, that he was the very Torre * of poetry. He played his coruscations so speciously, that his steel dust was mistaken by many for a shower of gold.

A gentleman reading to Dr. Johnson, Garrick’s ode on the Stratford jubilee, when he came to the following couplet :

“ The little loves like bees,

Clustering and climbing up his knees.”

I 5

Could

* A celebrated Italian fire-worker.

Could not help exclaiming, " what damned stuff here is!" to " Very bad to be sure, Sir, says the Doctor; but I should hope 'tis not my friend David's writing, but rather *Mrs. Garrick's woman.*" * The last effusion of our author's pelfantry, was the following.—I hope, Sir, says a friend, that the man I recommended to sit up with you was both wakeful and alert.—" Sir, answered the Doctor, his vigilance was that of a dormouse, and his activity that of a turn-spit on his first entrance into a wheel."

* The little voice like bees, chaffering and chimping on his knee.

I e

A

CATALOGUE
OF
Dr. JOHNSON's WORKS.

TRANSLATION of the Voyages
of Lobo, published 1735.

A Complete Vindication of the Li-
censors of the Stage, from the ma-
licious and scandalous aspersions of
Mr. Brooke, author of *Gustavus*
Vasa, with a Proposal for making
the Office of Licenser more extensive
and effectual, by an impartial Hand.

4to. 1739

I 6

Marmor

Marmor Norfolciensis, pamphlet 1739.

Re-printed, with notes, 1775

Parliamentary Debates, from 1740 to
1744, in the Gentleman's Magazine.

Life of Savage, 1 vol. duodecimo, 1744

Miscellaneous Observations on the
Tragedy of Macbeth, with Remarks

on Sir T. H's. (Sir Thomas Han-
mer's) Edition of Shakespeare, and

Proposals for a new Edition of Shake-
speare, with a Specimen, 1745.

Rambler, 4 vols. originally published
in numbers, 1750

Dictionary of the English language, in
2 vols. folio, published 1755

Ditto abridged, in 2 vols. octavo

Occasional Papers in the Universal
Visitor, 1756

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Ditto in the Literary Magazine, 1756

and 1757 1780. 12mo.

Idler, 2 vols. duodecimo, originally
published in numbers, 1758

Prince of Abyssinia, 1 vol. duodecimo,

1759 MISCELLANEOUS PAPERS

Edition of Shakespeare, 8 vols. octavo,

1765 Dittos by Mr. Thomas Steevens, in conjunction with Mr. Steevens, 10 vols. octavo, published

1778 Falkland's Islands

False Alarm

Patriot

Taxation no Tyranny

Tour to the Western Islands of Scot-

land, 1775 VISION OF THE DESTITUTE

Convict's Address, 1777 MEMENTO OF MANKIND

Lives

Lives of the British Poets, 10 vols;

Small octavo, 1780.

Ditto, 4 vols, large octavo.

Large octavo, medium in binding.

MISCELLANEOUS PIECES of

DR. JOHNSON, published in Three
Volumes by Mr. THOMAS DAVIES.

Pieces in the First Volume,

**Review of the Enquiry into the Origin
of Evil**

Political State of Great Britain

**Review of Letters from Sir Isaac New-
ton to Dr. Bentley.**

Preface to the Preceptor

Vision of Theodore

Memoirs of the King of Prussia

Life

Life of Barretier. Belonging to the Folio Library

Life of Dr. Sydenham. Belonging to the Folio Library

— Sir Francis Drake. Belonging to the Folio Library

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*Origin and Importance of Small Tracts
and Fugitive Pieces. Written for
the Introduction to the Harleian
Miscellany.*

An account of the Harleian Library

Plan of an English Dictionary, in a

Letter to the Earl of Chesterfield,

1747

Preface

Preface to the Folio of Johnson's Dictionary

Proposals for printing the Dramatic Works of Shakespeare

Preface to Shakespeare, published in 1765

Preliminary Discourse to the London Chronicle

Introduction to Proceedings of the Committee, to manage Contributions for cloathing French Prisoners.

Thoughts on Agriculture, Ancient and Modern

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Dissertation on Pope's Epitaphs

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Character of Mr. William Collins

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*America, to his Friend, a Gentle-
man in England*

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into the Origin of our Ideas of the*

Sublime and Beautiful

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of the History of the Council of*

Trent

Preface to a Dictionary of Commerce

*Some Account of the Life of Benve-
nuto Cellini*

Di Dio

Some

Some Account of the Life and Writ-
ings of Dr. John Bachard

*A Letter from a French Refugee in
America, to his Friends at Geneva.*

*Original Papers in behalf of the late
Dr. Dodd, given at the end of this
volume.*

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Preliminary Discourse to the
Year 1758.*

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POEMS of DR. JOHNSON, just pub-*

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Lane Theatre.*

*Ditto to Comus, for the benefit of
Milton's Grand-daughter.*

Some

Ditto

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- Ditto to the Comedy of The Word to the Wife
- Veres written at the request of a Gentleman to whom a Lady had given a Sprig of Myrtle
- Irene, a Tragedy
- A Latin Version of Pope's Messiah
- Spring, an Ode
- The Midsummer's Wish
- Autumn
- Winter
- The Winter's Walk
- A Song
- An Evening Ode to Stella
- The Natural Beauty, to Stella
- Stella in Mourning

To

- To Lyce, an elderly Lady
 To Lady Firebrace, at Bury Assizes
 The Vanity of Wealth
 To Miss ——, on her giving the
 Author a Gold and Silk net-work
 Purse of her own weaving
 To Miss ——, on her playing on the
 Harpsichord
 On the Death of Dr. Robert Levetl A
 Latin Epitaph on Sir Thomas Hanmer
 Translation of the Latin Epitaph on
 Sir Thomas Hanmer
 Latin Epitaph and Translation on Dr.
 Oliver Goldsmith
 Ditto on Henry Thrale, Esq.
 Latin ditto on Maria Salisbury
 Milton's Grave ————— Posthumous.

eT

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from Sallust

One volume of Latin Poems

* One ditto of Memoirs of his own Life

And some Greek Epigrams.

* Consisting of loose memorandums. Another volume was burned by Doctor Johnson in a mistake, a few days before his death, along with other manuscripts.

P O S T -

[182]

To Lady Talbot. Allato

POSTSCRIPT.

To Miss

Liberation Biscay
Audire a deo
Liberation of the British Colonies
from Saffron

*W*HEN the late unfortunate Dr. Dodd was under sentence of death, Dr. Johnson humanely exerted himself in his favour, by writing several letters, paragraphs, &c. which appeared in the public papers of that time; he was also the author of the sermon which Dr. Dodd preached in the chapel of Newgate; it was afterwards published under the title of, The Convict's Address to his unhappy Brethren, delivered

delivered in the Chapel of Newgate on Friday June 6, 1777, by William Dodd, LL. D.

The profits arising from the sale of this pamphlet, Dr. Dodd appropriated very honourably to discharge a debt he had contracted with his bookseller, a short time before the period of that transaction for which he made atonement with his life. Dr. Johnson likewise wrote all the following pieces, except the paper which is distinguished thus ; and even that received considerable corrections from his pen, which indeed may be traced in every part of it.

They

They were printed by Doctor Johnson's directions, under the title of, Occasional Papers by the late William Dodd, LL. D. but on the day before the intended publication, Mrs. Dodd, for whose benefit the sale of them was proposed, conscious they were not her husband's writing, thanked the Doctor in most grateful terms for his benevolent intentions, and begged they might be suppressed; her request was granted, and the whole impression, consisting of 500 copies, were cancelled, two or three excepted, from one of which they are now reprinted.

The

The reason which operated against the publication of them at that time no longer subsisting, their appearance cannot now offend either the delicacy of the author, or Mrs. Dodd's * strict regard to truth.

They are too valuable to be consigned to oblivion by a temporary and accidental suppression; and it is but fair, in laying them before the public, to restore them to the real author.

What adds still more lustre to Dr.

* The widow of Dr. Dodd died about six months since at Ilford in Essex, to which place she retired immediately after her husband's death.

Johnson's conduct in this business, is,
he had but a very slight knowledge of
Dr. Dodd.

The sermon before the convicts Dr.
Dodd called emphatically, as soon as
he perused it, a Divine Thought.

INTRODUCTION.

WHAT is to be expected in the following papers, their titles sufficiently indicate. The interest taken by the public in the sentence of the unfortunate man to whom they relate, naturally produced this publication.

He that commits these papers to the press, desires not to be considered as approving or condemning. He means to gratify the honest cur-

riosity of the reader, and hopes that his curiosity may end in useful meditation.

The papers are printed without any alteration, except the omission of a few words in one of the letters, which had a personal reference, and which therefore it was proper to suppress.

The most important of these pieces is the criminal's account of himself, which one of his friends advised him to have dilated more; but the day of execution was approaching, and he may be easily forgiven

forgiven if he left his story imperfect. He had, we ought to hope, other employment.

K 3

* Dr.

B. 87. I

An account of the life and writings
of Dr. Dodd, by Dr. Johnson.

* Dr. DODD's Account of
Himself.

The greatest affliction and oppression to my mind at present is, the piercing reflection that I, who have lived all my life in an endeavour to promote the truth of Christ-

K 3 tianity

* Of this account Dr. Dodd may be said to have only drawn the outlines ; the picture, as it appears, was finished by Dr. Johnson.

tianity, should now become an obstacle to that truth, and a scandal to that profession :—that I, who have with all my power, and with all sincerity, laboured to do good, and be a blessing to my fellow-creatures, should now become an evil and a curse. What shall I, can I, ought I to do, to prevent, as much as in me lies, any such dreadful consequences of my shame and my crime? Will a public attestation of my sincere belief of Christianity, and an ingenuous detail and confession of my offences, be of any avail?—In order to do this, and to acquaint you in few words

with a perfect knowledge of myself, (though I should wish to do it more fully) be so good as to consider the few following particulars.

I entered very young on public life, very innocent—very ignorant—and very ingenuous. I lived many happy years at West Ham, in an uninterrupted and successful discharge of my duty. A disappointment in the living of that parish obliged me to exert myself, and I engaged for a chapel near Buckingham Gate. Great success attended the undertaking : it pleased and delighted me. At the same time

Lord

Lord Chesterfield, to whom I was personally unknown, offered me the care of his heir, Mr. S.—.* By the advice of my dear friend, now in heaven, Dr. Squire, I engaged under promises which were not performed. Such a distinction too, you must know, served to increase a young man's vanity. I was naturally led into more extensive and important connections, and, of course, into greater expences, and more dissipations. Indeed, before, I never dissipated at all—for many, many years, never seeing a play-house, or any public place, but living entirely in Christian duties.

K 5 Thus

* The present Lord Chesterfield.

Thus brought to town, and introduced to gay life, I fell into its snares. Ambition and vanity led me on. My temper, naturally cheerful, was pleased with company; naturally generous, it knew not the use of money; it was a stranger to the useful science of œconomy and frugality; nor could it with-hold from distress, what it too much (often) wanted itself.

Besides this, the habit of uniform, regular, sober piety, and of watchfulness and devotion, wearing off, amidst this unavoidable scene of dissipation, I was not, as at West Ham, the

the innocent man that I lived
there. I committed offences against
my God ! which yet, I bless him,
were always, in reflexion, detes-
table to me.

But my greatest evil was expence.
To supply it I fell into the dreadful
and ruinous mode of raising money
by annuities. The annuities de-
voured me. Still I exerted myself
by every means to do what I
thought right, and built my hopes
of perfect extrication from all my
difficulties when my young and
beloved pupil should come of age.
But alas ! during this interval,

which was not very long, I declare with solemn truth, that I never varied from the steady belief of the Christian doctrines! I preached them with all my power, and kept back nothing from my congregations which I thought might tend to their best welfare; and I was very successful in this way during the time. Nor, though I spent in dissipation many hours which I ought not, but to which my connections inevitably led, was I idle during this period: as my Commentary on the Bible, my Sermons to Young Men, and several other publications prove. I can say too, with pleasure,

pleasure, that I studiously employed my interest, through the connections I had, for the good of others, I never forgot or neglected the cause of the distressed; many, if need were, could bear me witness. Let it suffice to say, that during this period I instituted the charity for the Discharge of Debtors.

Such is the plain and ingenuous detail of myself. I sincerely lament all I have done wrong. I love, and ever did, religion and goodness. I hate and abhor vice, and myself for ever having committed any. I look with peculiar detestation on
the

the crime to which I am at present
obnoxious; and I wish before I
die, of all things, if it be possible,
to make amends--by the most sin-
cere and full confession and humi-
liation of myself.

W. DODD.

May 21, 1777.

The

The following DECLARATION

Dr. DODD inclosed in a Letter
to a Friend some time before he
suffered.

THOUGH I acknowledge in
all its atrocity, and more especially
with a view to my peculiar circum-
stances and character, the offence
for which I suffer,---yet, consider-
ing that it is punished with such
sanguinary severity in no commer-
cial state under heaven ; and that in
my case it has been fully atoned
for, so far as human creatures can
atone to each other ; I cannot but
judge

judge my punishment rather hard : —and still more so, as that public (for whose benefit and example such ignominious death and punishment can alone be intended) has with a pleading, and almost unanimous voice supplicated the throne, in the most humble manner, to shew mercy, and avert the abhorred stroke, by assigning another, though perhaps not less afflictive punishment.

In this dispensation, however, I look far beyond the hand of poor human vengeance, and adore the justice and goodness of God, who

correcting

correcting me in judgment for deviations from the purity of his Gospel, as a distinguished minister of it, has been pleased to call me thus by death to proclaim my repentance, and to attest my faith in Him; and to declare to all my fellow-creatures, and to my beloved countrymen in particular, for whose love to me I am under the highest obligations, my firm belief of the principles which I have long preached, and in my writings delivered with the utmost truth and sincerity, and which I thus seal with my blood, in perfect resignation to the will of my adorable

-THE

Master,

Master, and in a firm dependence
on those principles for the salvation
of my own soul.

W. D O D D.

Mr. M-

L E T -

LETTERS to two noble Lords
of his Majesty's Most Honour-
able Privy Council.

LETTER I.

I My Lord,*
I HAVE committed a capital
crime, for which the sentence of
the law has passed upon me; and
whether that sentence shall be exe-
cuted in its full rigour, may, per-
haps, depend upon the suffrage of
your Lordship,

The

* Lord North, then Prime Minister.

The shame and self-reproach with which I now solicit your commiseration, I hope no man will ever feel, who has not deserved to feel them like myself. But I will not despair of being heard with pity, when, under the terrors of a speedy and disgraceful death, I most humbly implore your Lordship's intercession.

My life has not been wholly useless; I have laboured in my calling diligently and successfully; but success inflamed my vanity, and my heart betrayed me. Violent passions have exposed me to violent temp-

temptations; but I am not the first whom temptation has overthrown. I have, in all my deviations, kept Right always in view, and have invariably resolved to return to it. Whether, in a prosperous state, I should have kept my resolution, public justice has not suffered me to know.

My crime has been indeed atrocious, but my punishment has not been light. From a height of reputation, which perhaps raised envy in others, and certainly produced pride in myself, I have fallen to the lowest and grossest infamy;

my ; from an income which prudence might have made plentiful, I am reduced to live on those remains of charity which infamy has left me.

When so much has been given to justice, I humbly intreat that life, such as it must now be, may be given to mercy ; and that your Lordship's influence may be employed in disposing our Sovereign to look with compassion on,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's

Most humble Supplicant,

WILLIAM DODD.

June 11, 1777.

LET^A

LETTER II.

My LORD, *

NOT many days are now to pass before the fate of one of the most miserable of human beings will be finally determined. The efficacy of your Lordship's voice is well known; and whether I shall immediately suffer an ignominious death, or wander the rest of my days in ignominious exile, your opinion will probably determine. Do not refuse, my Lord, to hear the plea,

* Earl Mansfield.

whatever it may be, which I humbly oppose to the extremity of Justice.

I acknowledge, my Lord, the atrociousness of my crime; I admit the truth of the verdict that condemned me; yet I hope, that when my evil is censured, my good may likewise be remembered; and that it may be considered how much that society, which is injured by my fraud, has been benefited by my charitable labours.—I have offended; I am penitent; I entreat but for life, for a life which must

pass certainly in dishonour, and probably in want. Do not refuse, my Lord, to compassionate a man who, blasted in fame, and ruined in fortune, yet shrinks with terror from the precipice of eternity. Let me live, however miserable ; and let my miseries warn all those to whom they shall be known, against self-indulgence, vanity, and profusion.

Once more, my Lord, let me beg for life ; and when you see me going from the gloom of a prison to the penury of banishment, do

L not

(194)

not consider public justice as wholly unsatisfied by the sufferings of,

My Lord, Your Lordship's
Your Lordship's
Most humble Supplicant,

WILLIAM DODD.

June 11, 1777.

[Dr.

[Dr. DODD's Petition, presented
by his Brother.]

To the KING's Most Excellent
Majesty.

S I R,

IT is most humbly represented
to your majesty by William Dodd,
the unhappy convict now lying un-
der sentence of death:

That William Dodd, acknow-
ledging the justice of the sentence
denounced against him, has no
hope

hope or refuge but in your majesty's clemency:

That though to recollect or mention the usefulness of his life, or the efficacy of his ministry, must overwhelm him, in his present condition, with shame and sorrow, he yet humbly hopes that his past labours will not wholly be forgotten; and that the zeal, with which he has exhorted others to a good life, though it does not extenuate his crime, may mitigate his punishment.

That debased as he is by ignominy, and

and distressed as he is by poverty, scorned by the world, and detested by himself, deprived of all external comforts, and afflicted by consciousness of guilt, he can derive no hopes of longer life, but that of repairing the injury he has done to mankind, by exhibiting an example of shame and submission, and of expiating his sins by prayer and penitence.

That for this end he humbly implores from the clemency of your Majesty, the continuance of a life legally forfeited; and of the days which by your gracious com-

L 3 passion

passion he may yet live, no one shall pass without a prayer, that your Majesty, after a long life of happiness and honour, may stand, at the day of final judgment, among the merciful that obtain mercy.

So fervently prays the most distressed and wretched of your Majesty's subjects.

WILLIAM DODD.

[Mrs.

[Mrs. DODD's Petition, presented
by herself.]

To the QUEEN's Most Excellent
Majesty.

M A D A M,

IT is most humbly represented
by Mary Dodd, the wife of Dr.
William Dodd, now lying in pri-
son under sentence of death :

That she has been the wife of
this unhappy man more than twen-
ty-seven years, and has lived with
him in the greatest happiness

of conjugal union, and the highest state of conjugal confidence:

That she has been a constant witness of his unwearied endeavours for public good, and his laborious attendance on charitable institutions. Many are the families whom his care has delivered from want; many are the hearts which he has freed from pain, and the faces which he has cleared from sorrow.

That therefore she most humbly throws herself at the feet of the Queen, earnestly intreating that

the

the petition of a distressed wife asking mercy for a husband, may be considered as naturally soliciting the compassion of her Majesty; and that when her wisdom has compared the offender's good actions with his crime, she will be pleased to represent his case to our most gracious Sovereign in such terms as may dispose him to mitigate the rigour of the law.

So prays your Majesty's most dutiful subject and suppliant,

MARY DODD.

L 5

Such

Such were the last thoughts of a man whom we have seen exulting in popularity, and sunk in shame. For his reputation, which no man can give to himself, those who conferred it are to answer. Of his public ministry, the means of judging were sufficiently attainable. He must be allowed to preach well, whose sermons strike his audience with forcible conviction. Of his life, those who thought it consistent with his doctrine,

trine, did not originally form false notions. He was at first what he endeavoured to make others, but the world broke down his resolution, and he in time ceased to exemplify his own instructions.

Let those who are tempted to his faults, tremble at his punishment; and those whom he impressed from the pulpit with religious sentiments, endeavour to confirm them, by considering the regret and self-abhorrence with which he reviewed in prison his deviations from rectitude.

L 6

What

Whatever assistance his anxiety might prompt him to solicit in forming the petitions, (which, however, he must be considered as confirming by his name,) the account of his past life, and of his dying sentiments, are the effusions of his own mind. Those who read them with the proper disposition, will not read in vain.

A few days before Dr. DODD suffered death, the following observations on the propriety of pardoning him, were written and sent to the public papers, by Dr. Johnson.

YESTERDAY was presented to the Secretary of State by Earl PERCY, a petition in favour of Dr. Dodd, signed by twenty-three thousand hands. On this occasion it is natural to consider,

That in all countries penal laws have

have been relaxed as particular reasons have emerged.

That a life eminently beneficent, a single action eminently good, or even the power of being useful to the public, have been sufficient to protect the life of a delinquent :

That no arbiter of life and death has ever been censured for granting the life of a criminal to honest and powerful solicitation :

That the man for whom a nation petitions must be presumed to have merit uncommon in kind or in

in degree; for however the mode of collecting subscriptions, or the right of judgment exercised by the subscribers, may be open to dispute, it is at least plain that something is done for this man, that was never done for any other; and Government, which must proceed upon general views, may rationally conclude that this man is something better than other offenders have been, or has done something more than others have done.

That though the people cannot judge of the administration of justice so well as their governors, yet
their

their voice has always been regarded; and it is now
believed that they will go on to do

That this is a case in which the petitioners determine against their own interest; those for whose protection the law was made, intreat its relaxation, and our Governors cannot be charged with the consequences which the people bring upon themselves:

That as this is a case without example, it will probably be without consequences, and many ages will elapse before such a crime is again committed by such a man:

That

That though life be spared, justice may be satisfied with ruin, imprisonment, exile, infamy, and penury :

That if the people now commit an error, their error is on the part of mercy; and that perhaps history cannot shew a time in which the life of a criminal, guilty of nothing above fraud, was refused to the cry of nations, to the joint supplication of three and twenty thousand petitioners.

F I N I S.

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